

# THE SHAFT IN THE SKY

JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES, JR.



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JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES, JR.



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BY

JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES, JR.



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THE SHAFT IN THE SKY. I  

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To  
MY FATHER





*"These are the men who yesterday laid pen and plow aside to sail treacherous seas and stride the scorched plains of France; who brought noble heritages and bright hopes to their country's sacrificial pyre—brought them proudly, carelessly, joyfully. As they had faced life they faced death—with high hearts and clean hands. Now, my friends, they have come back, back from their Gethsemane, back from the grim borders of death—come with a new vision and a new faith. In the tortured brambles of Argonne, across the mud-run Flanders plains, athwart the mine-strewn furrows of the North Sea, they have encountered Death and something more, known immortal pain and something more. In the rockets' glow, in the flare of the guns, has come to them the vision of a new earth rising from the stench of the old. They have seen Democracy, bleeding, bruised, but saved from the quicksands; in the ebb and tide of battle they have seen the Angels of the Marne—and beyond and above, in the last dark hour, a new star rising over the nighttime of war!"*

*"The old order dies—and in this new dawn the world must turn to men like my young associates here. To these who have looked death in the face for their country's sake must now be entrusted their country's political and spiritual life. . . ."*

SENATOR CALHOUN at Essex.



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## Part One: NEW EARTH



# THE SHAFT IN THE SKY

## *Chapter One*

THERE was a legend of greatness about Commander Sturtevant. That he had been president of his class at Princeton, a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford in 1916, commander of an American destroyer in European waters during the war, and special naval *attaché* to the Peace Commission at Paris in 1919—were things which might of themselves have been judged tangible evidence of greatness in a young man not yet in his twenty-ninth year.

But greatness, after all, is rarely tangible, and Gilchrist Sturtevant's greatness was a subtle, qualitative thing that had attached to him from the very beginning. It may have been no more than his tendency to speak of such collective abstractions as "The People of America," "The Spirit of Humanity," "The Laboring Man," "The Enlightened Opinion of the World." It may have been only a certain dignity that came from the combination of a total lack of humor with a rugged face and a tall, rather gallant

figure. It may even have been his own habit of feeling himself great and acting on the presumption.

He impressed big men—men of affairs like George White. Also he impressed Hugh Cothran who knew him better than anyone else did. With men of importance—like Mr. White—it was a certain poise and completeness of facial expression, a controlled exaltation of speech, and a pleasant lack of self-consciousness or abashment, that made the impression. With Hugh, who was young, it was perhaps his friend's firm jaw, uncompromising gray eyes and distinguished crop of close-curved hair. Or it may have been the fact that Sturtevant was so complete an antithesis of Hugh himself.

In Washington greatness is kept in its place. The city is too familiar with greatness and the spectacle of dissolving greatness to be either naïve or appreciative. Which may explain why Sturtevant was not a success during the winter he spent in the Capital with Hugh before the war. At this time, of course, he had only the legend and none of the later tangible indicia of greatness, and it was Hugh's popularity alone which "floated" his friend. To the younger set, the débutantes and dancing men, Sturtevant was merely a somber, humorless, decidedly formal chap who happened to be Hugh Cothran's friend.

To be Hugh Cothran's friend was to be the friend of a complete Gascon. "A Gascon," said an amateur lexicographer, "is one to whom little things mean so much and big things so little that he has always in reserve the capacity for making a perfect fool of himself—or of running himself gallantly to death in a cause not worth the running. Cyrano was a Gascon, and d'Artagnan!" The distinguishing feature seemed to be an altogether unreasonable standard of values. For example, there was Hugh's reputation at the club. His motive in living at a club, he said, was that in case of accident or death the newspapers might speak of him as a "well-known, local clubman." "Sporting, you know—flavor of cards and wine—Major Pendennis and all that." The sporting effect (which was internal rather than external) was spoiled to an extent, it is true, by the shockingly domestic habits of some of his fellow-clubmen—middle-aged bachelors who retired at nine, rose at six, and had bottles of milk left at their doors in the morning. Nothing racy or "clubman" about milk bottles, surely! To these gentlemen Hugh was a nuisance who sang in his bath and clicked his typewriter at profane hours of the night. They suspected him too of going a pace; he was overheard ordering breakfast in bed on several occasions, and during one week he had been seen in a dinner coat on five successive



evenings. Often there were guests in his room and he could be heard calling for vichy and ice; afterwards boisterous laughter would sound from the transom. His telephone was constantly in use, generally on frivolous service.

Before the war came and he went abroad as a Junior Lieutenant on destroyer service, Hugh had been a reporter on the *Washington Courier*. In his initial career with the navy he was handicapped because, in spite of his height, his physical appearance was strikingly unmilitary. Clear forehead, thoughtful, roving eyes, and rounded, rather feminine features surmounting a chin which appeared weak until the profile showed it firm on an unexpectedly mature jaw. The mouth too was the same contradiction of weakness and strength—a play of white teeth under full, slightly flattened lips which spoke for humor, sensitiveness, obstinacy, shyness, and a great burden of imagination.

To the failure of Hugh's efforts for the acceptance of Sturtevant by his friends during the winter before the war there was one exception. This exception, however, represented a more surprising and notable success than even Hugh had hoped for.

The activities of a social season among Washington's younger set are often focused, in fact

if not in theory, upon a single débutante. This winter the débutante was Alice Deering. For good looks, for family and fortune, for petulancy, charm and ruthlessness, her name led all the rest. She was so popular she could despise popularity, so well-born the lowliest might pay her court if he offered something novel, so venturesome that no consequence halted her unless it were boredom, and so thoroughly provided for in her grandfather's last testament that every purchaseable thrill was hers for the asking. She adored Hugh because he never fell in love with her and because there was a certain amused, carefree indifference in his manner suggestive of something shy and inviolate held in reserve. His pliant will and easy imagination drew her or followed her into constant new pastures, and always with an aroma of spiritual health that appealed to the essentially healthy in herself.

It was her own social waywardness which attracted her first to Gilchrist Sturtevant. Here was a "great young man" whom no one seemed able to get along with! A woman-hater, Hugh said—that was a challenge to vanity, a feather to tickle the curiosity of a young woman whose specialty was the unusual. She let Hugh talk of him, listened to certain exalted abstractions attributed to the great young man—and yawned—and remembered. One night in February she brought

him home with her from Chevy Chase after a dance, sat him down on a broad divan to watch the death of a woodfire, plucked thoughtfully at her corsage bouquet, tossed thumbfulls of rose petals upon him—and bared her immortal soul. The chicanery of the thing was of itself, surely, proof that she had no soul; at any rate the “immortal” one she bared was second hand—it was indeed Gilchrist’s own bag of phrases which she had caught and remembered from Hugh’s conversations and was now offering to the author himself. The author was successfully duped. He acclaimed the phrases but failed to suspect the source. He was entranced. Here, in the very core of the social inanities he had come to despise, was a woman who thought of life as he did, whose social and political reactions were his own, who could feel deeply and dare greatly! Here was one who scorned as he did this little Washington world where love was only a name on a brass pocketpiece to be passed from hand to hand in exchange for excitement or kisses or for mere animal joy at the coin’s click! The fire burned low on the hearth; there were rose petals on his shoulder and in her lap; her soul kept pace with his own!

It was chicanery, of course, but the very triumph of it intoxicated the artist. Dim, strange things she had never known before stirred in her

and she was truly moved when the woodfire died and Sturtevant rose to go.

“I shan’t kiss you to-night,” she said, “I’ve kissed so many people.”



## *Chapter Two*

**T**HEN there was the war. Sturtevant disappeared from Alice Deering's world into a vague place called "overseas" and new faces claimed her. Quickly the "dim, strange things" were forgotten and the man who had stirred them lived only as an incident. Except for his letters she might have forgotten even the incident, in the parade of new sensations and half-loves that followed her through months of dilletante service with the Motor Corps. Once or twice she did remember some fragment of what she had felt on the rose-petal evening, and sat down to write him queer, half-cynical, half-patriotic letters in an unnatural style which she considered appropriate to what she was remembering.

To Sturtevant these letters were sheerest music in the discords about him. Because his nature was intense and there was war and death everywhere, because she was so truly the first woman in his life, he placed her topmost in his sky, clothed her in white, and gave her the same adoration he had hitherto given to such abstractions as Deity, Humanity, Courage. After the Armistice, while



he was in Paris with the Peace Commission, he began to write her letters which burned with a passionate idealism for Wilson and the League—letters which bored Alice and yet flattered her with their presumption that she understood what it was all about.

“At Manchester,” he wrote, “Wilson said all I had ever hoped would be said. With a single speech he assumed the leadership of liberalism all over the world. To-day, with more power than a Cæsar, he stands at Paris—the first great Internationalist, the only man to accomplish the ideals of this victory. He is type of the new era. The world is exalted and leans on the American President to manifest its mood . . . The sun is rising on America, on mankind . . . a finer lot of men to work with . . . a woman like you to love . . . .”

In March the Commander came home. For the moment, at least, Alice had forgotten him altogeth'er. The reason was Blaine Todd, a naval aviator, who could play delightfully and make love with a nonchalance which demanded nothing of her.

Yet Sturtevant was a distinguished figure, she discovered, more than ever the “great young man” now that the newspapers had lauded his work at Paris and certain exploits in the North

Sea. Perhaps, after all, Blaine Todd might be the fortune hunter Hugh called him! At any rate he was the sort of aviator whose only flights had been from an office chair on F Street by day to the upper ether of fashion and wealth by night! An even more important thing was that his service stripes were white, and she really must have the gold ones of foreign service just now—they were being worn!

So she reproached the Commander for not writing oftener and was sweetly proprietary. She talked to him a little of the League and advised him to go into politics (which, she had learned from Hugh, was what he wanted to be advised to do). Night after night throughout the spring months she exhibited his golden chevrons at country clubs and cabarets, permitting him to make love to her but adroitly forestalling talk of marriage or engagement. Marriage, she considered rather a middle-class habit!

Other heroes returned; the gold stripes multiplied, and finally, in spite of an occasional return of those vague things she had experienced on the rose-petal evening, she began to find herself unmercifully bored. Her "great young man" had no flippancy or nonchalance; he didn't know how to play, couldn't make love as she liked it. What was worse, he was really *in* love and his intensity

made him a sort of perpetual conscience that demanded a side of her she feared and disliked.

She began to tolerate him, to flirt with other gold stripes, to contrive little devices that would hurt him and yet hold him. She enjoyed bringing him into groups or occasions in which he was wholly out of place—and making herself the life of the group, the wine of the occasion. One night in May she drove him in her red Stutz out to Arthur Herrick's party at the Purple Iris. It maddened her that he insisted on talking politics all the way—she was sorry she had ever mentioned the League. Mr. George White, it seemed, had offered him the Democratic nomination for Congress from the Seventh District of his state, and he could talk of nothing else:

“White's reactionary, of course,” he was saying earnestly, his head thrown back in occasional emphasis, “but he's boss of Essex County. He has the borough in his pocket and I can use him. No man with as much money as that, I'm ready to admit——”

“Ready to admit,” she mocked sweetly. He used the expression so frequently it irritated her beyond measure.

“Sorry,” he laughed, “making speeches again, I guess. It's a fact though—the voters up there——”

“That was Blaine Todd,” she interrupted ex-

citedly as a rickety Dodge passed them, "was Arthur driving—did you see?"

"I don't know," he said, hurt as he had often been hurt lately at her lack of interest. "Blaine's an old beau of yours, isn't he?"

She decided that she did not like the type of man who said "beau."

"He prefers a silver 'bow,'" she snorted, "Myrtis Bayne has him for the moment—her mother owns the mint or something."

"You mean he wants to marry money?" he said so simply she laughed.

"Arthur writes stunning poems," she continued, "his newest one is to me, you know."

Of all men in Washington Sturtevant most despised Arthur Herrick. He despised his exotic poetry, his habit of getting drunk, his slinking sentimentality, his pretense of intellectualism, his lack of any other profession than poetry and gambling. He did not know that Arthur had recently forgotten his latest love to discover for Alice and proclaim to her an unparalleled passion.

At dinner, later, Sturtevant had the privilege of seeing the poet grow a little drunker than he had ever been before. Perhaps it was Arthur's sense of the responsibilities devolving upon a host. He drank so much that he more than "paralleled" his lately avowed passion, and the poetry and abandon



with which he made love to Alice in the garden after dinner were altogether refreshing to her after Sturtevant's intensity and Blaine Todd's nonchalance. Toward the end of the evening he fell over a banister and had to be fished out of a honeysuckle vine by Gilchrist and Blaine.

At three o'clock they began to go home. When Gilchrist came out of the coat room he found Alice *tête-a-tête* with Arthur in a corner.

"Are you coming now?" he said.

"In two minutes," she nodded.

He waited ten minutes on the veranda with Blaine and Myrtis, and then returned.

"In a moment, Gilchrist," she begged nicely, patronizing him with a smile when she saw he was exasperated. Arthur was holding her hand.

"I'll wait for you in the car," he said, letting the screen door bang.

He walked out to the road, climbed in the Stutz and lit a cigarette. He was sore at heart and more tired than he could remember ever having been before. He would never understand these people, or Alice! It was unbearable—to hang about a whole evening watching the greedy appreciation she gave whatever new sensation this Herrick chap provided! Of course he could accuse her of no disloyalty for she had never pretended to be loyal, had no conception of loyalty! Seated in her red Stutz with the dull morning

stars above him, he permitted resolves and reactions to crystallize which had been accumulating over many days and nights. How infinitely weary he was—wearied of the effort to make her fit the dream he had carried overseas, bitter at the constant compromise, ashamed of the excuses he had been making to himself for her! Yes, he was ready to give her up! He owed it to his self-respect!

Fifteen minutes passed before she came running down the path to him. "Oh, Gilchrist," she whispered impishly, looking back at the Inn, "will you drive the car in! I'll meet you at the house."

"Why?" he demanded roughly, throwing away his cigarette.

"Well—there's going to be a house-party at the Durand's and Arthur wants to talk about it. I'm driving in with him."

He tossed back his head as though he were making a speech. "You can't do it," he said, shortly, "I'm responsible for you here and Herick's too drunk to drive."

She hadn't really meant it. It was only another device to annoy her great young man. But this manner was quite intolerable. It made her suddenly furious. She decided angrily that she *would* go in with Arthur—drive the Dodge herself! Gilchrist had been insufferably stupid all evening—and now this tone with her!

"I hardly think you're any more responsible for me than Arthur is," she said, coolly, "I don't need a nurse. If you won't take the Stutz in Blaine will—he wants to drive Myrtis anyhow."

He was very white and the muscles under his cheekbones assumed a queer, lumpy prominence. This would be the end—yes—but, by God, it should be no weak one! He had always commanded; he had never been beaten! He'd have his way now—the young fool was drunk but that wasn't the point!

"You're coming with me", he said, "I won't have it."

"We'll see," she replied hotly, and turned up the path.

In a moment he was out of the car and had overtaken her. "Stop!" he ordered, seizing her arm.

She wrenched herself free. "You fool," she said, black eyes snapping, "go home!"

He picked her up quickly in both arms, staggered a little for balance, and walked with her back to the Stutz. Her clenched fist struck him once on the cheek with all her might and then she made no further resistance. He placed her in the car, climbed into the driver's seat and started the engine. His cheek was bleeding where one of her rings had clawed the flesh.

On the drive in she sat up straight as a corseted



nun, silent as a shadow, and stared doggedly ahead. Gilchrist did not open his mouth. At her door he helped her out, said good-night, and walked away.

Her head reeled. The world reeled. She sat down on the bottom stair at the library door, dry-eyed, white-lipped, shaking with actual nausea. Given opportunity, she could have killed him at this moment without a qualm. He dared! He had laid hands on her! Beaten her with brute force! The slow fury she felt was no mere gust of temper—she would hate him to-morrow and a year from to-morrow! In half an hour she had grown old! Everything in her life seemed changed! It was revolution—nothing would be the same again! When she remembered that she had let him go without a word of this she was glad! It was not a matter for words!

## *Chapter Three*

**T**HE next day Sturtevant vanished from Washington with Hugh for a week at his little camp in Essex County. A few days later Alice left for the Durand house-party at Elizabethtown where she lost no time in making it known that her present temper was a disagreeable one.

“For heaven’s sake, Deering,” Henry Durand begged when she slid immodestly out of the big Chandler in front of the Elizabethtown Drug Store before he could halt at the curb, “these people know me. You’re a regular hoyden to-day!”

“Your fault, little boy,” she grimaced, turning to watch her reflection in the store window, “you wouldn’t let me drive, you threw away the chewing gum——”

“And removed your feet from the windshield, yes. You don’t seem to have any respect for this town.”

Henry was two years her junior but in dignity and sense he deemed himself infinitely her senior.

“If you weren’t a darned good looking girl

people wouldn't stand for you—you're pretty nearly impossible anyhow," he decreed, stalking moodily ahead of her into the drug store.

She drank three Coca Colas and displeased the clerk by smoking cigarettes and saying "damn" very audibly when she spilled a fourth glass. Henry's embarrassed glance at the druggist tried to explain that this was an unusual situation. When he finally got her back in the car his silence was massive and, he hoped, eloquent. He drove to Woodlawn at a pace he had recently decided was fast enough to be manly without being spectacular.

Woodlawn was the country estate of Henry's father, ex-Secretary of War Durand. In Washington Durand was a name to conjure by. Socially it was a synonym for the top. Public office as a social asset is like wine and mellows with age. Members of an existing cabinet are, from the nature of things, on probation, with a suspicion of middle-class origin to overlive; but to have a cabinet flavor in one's past or a cabinet limb on the family tree is worth a thousand social graces. Of course there must be a million dollars somewhere, but the Durands had had money long before they acquired the cabinet flavor. No wonder fashionable Washington clamored at the great iron gates of Woodlawn. To be able to say "when my daughter was at the

Durand's last summer" was a Sesame to open any and all social doors.

"Let me out here," Alice ordered as the Chandler swung by the lower lawns. When Henry paid no attention she turned off the ignition and vaulted out before the car stopped.

At the tennis courts she found the rest of the party. "Hello, Deering," said Henry's sister, Ruth, "where's Hen?" Ruth was a junior at Vassar. She was a compact, sun-burned, businesslike individual.

"Horrid little boy! I don't care where he is." Alice's face was flushed and angry.

"Oh, look at her, Arthur—look at the poison scorpion— isn't she beautiful!" Blaine Todd teased, pinching her cheek.

"You have nice eyes, Blaine," she said without smiling, "I'll pick them out if you touch me again. Has Hugh come?"

"Hugh Cothran? He isn't coming."

"Isn't coming!" She had counted on Hugh as the only man in the world she felt like being nice to.

"Mater's just had a wire," Ruth explained, "he's been asked to speak with Commander Sturtevant at Essex and some places."

All the color left her face and lights flashed like envenomed fireflies in her eyes. "Com-



mander Sturtevant," she said, as though the name had slipped out, "Oh!"

"*Your* Commander, Deering," Blaine winked.

The heel of her shoe made a little gash in the tennis court surface. "Not in the least," she said, white with anger, and walked rapidly away towards the house.

Here was a situation! Everyone stared after her. Her parting look at them had been as cold and controlled as that of some middle-aged royalty!

"Why, what is it all about, Ruth?" Myrtis Bayne's expressionless eyes were wide and she moistened her lips slightly with a foretaste of soul-filling gossip.

"No one knows, I'm sure, old top," said Ruth with an inflection carefully arranged to give the impression that she *did* know.

"Who is this Sturtevant chap?" Arthur Her-  
rick demanded suspiciously, "she brought him to my party."

"Hugh's best friend." Ruth was reinforcing her position as one who might explain but wouldn't, "Hugh adores him. He's running for Congress from this district."

"Running for Congress! How old is he?" Statecraft was, after all, more picturesque than poetry, and Arthur's vague jealousy increased at the intelligence.

"Twenty-nine," she guessed correctly, "Hugh calls him a great young man—says people like Sturtevant are going to sum up the war for this country." As a junior at college she welcomed conversation of this kind; it identified her with a sort of *intelligenza*.

Arthur acted boredom and sauntered off towards the house. He scented an emotional interview with Alice.

"Why the conversation?" asked Henry, happening up quietly. The well-bred man, he considered, was quiet in all things. With one exception Henry's status with his sister's guests was an armed neutrality. It embittered him that a man better equipped with a sense of the fitness of things than any of them should be treated merely as Ruth's younger brother.

"If you ask me," he said (his complaint was that no one did ask him), "I think Sturtevant's the next Congressman from this district. So does Dad. I'm driving to Essex to-morrow to hear him."

"I'll probably go with you, Henry," said Ruth sweetly. She was irritated at the inconsequence of the interruption.

"Not a chance, old girl—politics! Can't be bothered with a lot of women!"

"What women are bothering you, Hen, old top?" said a spirited new voice.

Blaine Todd looked sourly at the fresh arrival who was cooling a very warm and very aristocratic brow with the flat of a mashie. Had her golf clubs, of course! Merely because he happened to have the amateur record for the Chevy Chase course he was expected to spoil his game for the next two hours with a girl who held no particular part in his wholly definite scheme of things! Hadn't she done eighteen holes already! No getting around the woman! Wanted to improve her golf!

It was not that Cecilia Lee ever demanded. There was nothing domineering about this delicate-featured girl who carried her head like a thoroughbred horse. The secret of her claim upon others was her passion for wanting and her seriousness about it. Whatever Cecilia wanted had a knack of seeming important. Luckily she wanted very little—except that life should be easy and pretty and should never strike too deep. The seriousness was never offensive, either, because it was overlain with a light little trick of whimsy which tempered her self-consciousness and relieved the lack of humor.

Henry adored Cecilia, phlegmatically. Now he put his case to her——

“Ruth wants to tag along to-morrow when Sturtevant and Hugh speak at Essex. I'm not going to take any females—positively.”



She balanced on tiptoes. "Hugh—speaking in public! Oh, that *will* be funny. We'll both go, Ruth, shall we!"

Henry was frank if not fraternal. "Fine," he said, "would you like to go?"

Blaine Todd shouldered a golf bag grimly. "If you don't quit vamping Henry, I'll tell his mama, Cess," he scowled. Henry shivered slightly and gave the golf champion an envenomed side glance which, one felt, turned discomfiture to disdain.

Alice was making discords on the drawing room piano when Arthur found her.

"What a din. Wagner?"

"No—it's Mrs. Durand. I had to get her out. She was talking to me."

"Where is she?"

"Up-stairs—headache." The pianist thumped three adjacent keys for a chord which explained her hostess' headache.

Arthur's romances always began masterfully and ended abjectly. His hand dropped easily on the offending one at the keyboard.

"I meant everything I said at the Purple Iris that night," he murmured.

"Of course. You always do. I'm busy now Arthur."

"What's all this Sturtevant rumpus? Old stuff?"

"No—I dislike him."

He drew a soft chord from the keys with graceful fingers.

"Running for Congress!" he mused invitingly.

"Running, yes, any fool can run."

"Mr. Durand thinks he'll get it."

Alice sat up straight. "If I were a man—if I were in politics—I'd—I'd——"

"What?"

"I'd break him—yes—break him!"

The poet smiled indulgence. "Why the heat? I believe you're in love with him."

"Idiot!" she flashed angrily and prepared to go. He restrained her.

"I didn't mean that." He looked thoughtful. "If you were a man—if you were in politics—damn it all, Alice, I believe you could upset anybody's little plan."

"Oh, well—I'm not." She was never at war with fate but was generally irritated at it.

Arthur flattered her with more thought. "Women abroad do such things," he reflected, "the French woman's *salon* and the English woman's week-end house-parties make political careers. Break them too. But women in this country aren't well enough informed."

A pause while Alice travelled a long distance and opened her eyes wide.

“Oh, rot!” she said, absently, “I don’t believe foreign women are so well informed.”

Alice Deering could be many things to many people. When the party assembled at dinner her bad temper was gone and she chose to be thirty and a woman of the world. She sat by Mr. Durand and bewitched him with her poised intelligence and humor. In fashionable Washington a sense of humor is rare and Alice’s was genuine. The old statesman played up gallantly and pleased himself with anecdotes of his portfolio in the nineties. He even told an amusing story ending “the Epistles were the wives of the Apostles” at which Mrs. Durand frowned and every one else roared. He had told the story at least once at every house-party any one could remember. Henry sat by Cecilia at the other end of the table; he fancied the two of them quite *tête-a-tête* and poured out details of a hunting trip he had taken in May. Cecilia looked deep attention but her mind was hopping from idea to idea remote from Henry and his hunting.

Coffee was served in the adjoining room. Ruth and Cecilia talked the trip to Essex while Blaine and Myrtis drummed a ragged “*Haunt of the Witches*” at the piano with noisy double basses.

Alice begged the artists to stop "as Mrs. Durand has a headache." Mrs. Durand had forgotten the origin of her headache and was pleased at the girl's thoughtfulness.

"Oh, Cess, what's Hugh doing since he left the Navy?" Alice asked.

"Washington correspondent for country newspapers—has about a million I think."

"Lovely! He's always doing exciting things. Queer he never mentions it."

"Maybe you don't give him a chance to talk about himself, old dear," Cecilia suggested with malice.

"Cat!" Alice hugged her and sauntered into the library.

"Deering's too sweet to-night—she's up to something," said Ruth.

Blaine pranced up, hands clasped behind him, shoulders in revolution.

"Come on Ruth, an old fashioned shimmy!"

Ruth's was not the build nor the temperament for this particular dance—but fashion is no respecter of build or temperament. She set the Victrola going and joined Blaine. Her mother looked distressed—really, the garment was so intimate!

"Ugly idea of motion, Mrs. Durand, isn't it!" said Arthur settling himself beside her. "In-



vented by savages. Have you read 'Joan and Peter'?" He was being quiet to-night.

Blaine disappeared presently with Myrtis. Myrtis had two million in her own name. Of course she was cowlike—but, after all——!

In the library behind a cigar and a newspaper Mr. Durand was confiding in himself. He was confessing that he was a good father and an excellent story-teller. Enter Alice, humming "*Haunt of the Witches*", and settled on the big divan with one foot underneath her. She pulled a sofa cushion into her lap and patted it domestically.

"Do you mind, Uncle John? They're all so stupid in there." She had always called him "Uncle John."

Mr. Durand put down his paper and looked at her almost timidly.

"Good! But nothing is more stupid than an old man, I'm afraid."

"I'm older myself lately, I think. When I was a débutante it was different. I don't know—I thought I'd be quite grown up by now."

The naïve creature now addressing John Durand was altogether young; there was no trace of his cosmopolitan dinner partner.

"I don't believe you know how I admire you—its because you've really done things," she continued.

In the age of Victoria youth encountered age with respectful timidity but a more modern day has shifted the embarrassment to the elders. Mr. Durand almost blushed. "When you are as old as I am," he said, "you will have done many fine things yourself, I'm sure." He caught himself wishing vaguely that his own daughter were as eager and fond as this lovely "adopted" niece.

"Talk to me about something real, Uncle John," she begged, "there are so many things—about democrats and republicans and all that."

The old man looked relieved; the Victorian balance was magically restored. "Politics are very interesting just now," he said indulgently.

Her eye was on the ceiling, gravely. "We could begin here. Who is the mayor—or Congressman, is it—of this—er——"

"Hodges. A republican. He'll be opposed for re-election next fall by young Sturtevant on the democratic ticket. The appearance of a man of Sturtevant's type at this time is interesting." Mr. Durand nodded agreement with himself.

The merest flicker in the black eyes indicated her satisfaction with the trend. "Will he win—Sturtevant?"

"I think he will, yes. But not without a fight. There are factors which make it uncertain."

"Who would be against him, I wonder?" She

implied that opposition was wicked and inconceivable.

"That depends. He is an idealist of the Wilson type. His views on reconstruction problems are rather—er—advanced without being revolutionary. It is possible he may be left high and dry between two tides—the radical labor vote on one side and the rather desperate conservatism of men in his own party like George White on the other. You know White is the democratic leader in this state. What he says usually goes."

"George White! I know him—comes to mother's dinners. A terrible old bear!"

Not for years had John Durand found as eager an audience in his own home. He expanded. He toyed with ideas as new to himself as they were strange to Alice, formulating a theory of reconstruction problems with which he was infinitely pleased. Alice's wrist watch registered an hour.

"Gilchrist Sturtevant may make the same mistake Woodrow Wilson has made. In his belief that the end of the war has brought a millenium within reach he may be ignoring—fatally—the principle of action and reaction. There is more confusion and restlessness and ugliness to-day than perhaps ever before. He believes the world is better than it was; the masses believe it *ought* to be better. And George White believes it is static and will never be better."



"What do you believe?"

He hesitated. "The war cost us fifty years of progress," he said, "to save three thousand from a Prussian victory. As for Utopia—that comes by way of the heart."

Alice sighed, as though Utopia were the goal of all her concern. She was frightfully tired.

"Its all wonderfully interesting. You're good to talk to me, Uncle John—really—do you mind——" and the daintiest and most daughterly of kisses charmed the old man's brow.

The interview was ended.

As she passed the drawing room Arthur was saying to Mrs. Durand, "Yes, the movies have driven literature into a corner. Modern novelists will confine themselves more and more to character development, spiritual experiences—things that can't be photographed. I have always thought of the fiction writer as an historian of——"

Alice made a face and slipped by. Upstairs in her own room she gathered pencil and paper and began to scrawl in a round positive hand:

"People don't give a damn about the League of Nations now. They have troubles of their own.

"He'll have to take sides in the coal strike. George White is president of a big coal company.

"If he sticks to Wilsonism the masses will say

he is reactionary and the George White people will say he is a red.

“Doesn’t believe in profiteers. Thinks High Cost of Living natural after a war. Won’t please public—want a victim.

“Believes in closed shop (? ? ?) White NO.

“George White is an honest boss. Believes in his system.”

She folded this document carefully and tucked it away in her travelling case. On the floor by the bed were the halves of a photograph which had been torn in two. It was Sturtevant in naval uniform. She picked them up and put them away in the case.

## *Chapter Four*

*E*SSEX, county seat of Essex County, was in holiday dress on Grange Day. At the Fair Grounds there were ball games, horse-shoe pitching tournaments and foot, horse and buggy races. As the Durand car passed the judges' stand a pleasantly intoxicated farmer was announcing the time of the last race through a battered megaphone. "That man's a scoundrel," said Henry, "the time he's giving is two seconds better than the world's record. Look at the old nag—I don't see how she got around."

Placards on fences and telegraph poles announced a mass meeting at the town hall. Gilchrist Sturtevant, Democratic candidate for Congress, would open his campaign. United States Senator Calhoun, the "little giant," would speak in support of the nominee.

"But why don't they mention Hugh?" Cecilia asked.

Henry began to understand why Cecilia had come. "Hugh's a joke," he said roughly, "rotten speaker."

The town hall was crowded already. Women

and children were everywhere, eating popcorn and shouting at each other across the hall. Most of the men were on the back rows chewing tobacco and spitting sociably. The air was thick with the heavy animal odor of people who live out of doors.

Henry left the girls in a corner to look for Alec Brown, chairman of the county committee.

"This is terrible," said Ruth, "I'm sorry we came."

"Oh, I like it." Cecilia's eyes were dancing, "such funny people. Fancy Hugh making a speech to them!"

Henry returned with Mr. Brown who was all smiles and bows for the children of John Durand.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed humping forward to shake hands, "I'm right glad you've come, ladies, that I am. It's great speaking you'll hear. Now we'll just put you in the box over there. It's the—er—millennium box they call it. I reckon for such distinguished visitors nothing's too good!"

"It's very thoughtful of you, Mr. Brown," said Cecilia, whose sporting blood was up. "And aren't you going to sit with us?" Politics was a great game!

The old farmer politician was flattered. He straightened one shoulder and bowed profoundly.

"Now that's kind of you, right kind, yes. But I have my duties. Yes, my duties on the platform. I rather mistrust I must deny myself. A great



pleasure—yes, thank you, thank you.” With a consciousness of consummate gallantry he bowed himself away.

In the box they had an opportunity to look over the audience and the stage. Mr. Brown’s committee were already seated at the rear of the platform. In front were four vacant chairs for the speakers and the master of ceremonies. The local band—a trombone, a piano, and a drum—was tuning up. A “spontaneous” ovation was to greet the orators.

“There’s George White,” said Henry, indicating a rotund, melancholy individual with an expressionless eye, “President of the Bloody Hollow Coal Company. Must have come up from Washington. He’s boss of this state, you know. Guess it’s a cinch for Sturtevant. Ah—look!”

The audience had hushed abruptly except for random voices, and the committee were looking off stage. A little flutter of commotion from the wings at the left and Chairman Brown entered, his whole bearing ponderous with the import of the occasion. After him came Senator Calhoun and Hugh Cothran—and last of all, the candidate. Everyone rose immediately; there was sound everywhere, handclappings, hurrahs, stamping of feet. When the noise tired a little Chairman Brown nodded mightily, the band struck up “Dixie,” and the tempest of sound rose

again. Three times the watchful trombone lifted the dying applause in this manner to new life while the speakers stood bowing and smiling. The candidate waved his hand at intervals as if he were the best fellow in the world and felt boisterously at home. Hugh Cothran was nervously putting his hands into his pockets and drawing them out again. He cleared his throat several times as though he were about to begin speaking. Recognizing the occupants of the "millennium" box, he looked consternation.

"Ugh—he's nervous!" Cecilia whispered and turned her head away.

"Sturtevant has more dignity," said Ruth, "what a strong face—he's *very* good looking!"

A signal from Chairman Brown and the band capitulated. Cecilia hated the silence that followed; Hugh was going to break down—she wished she hadn't come! The three speakers sat down and Mr. Brown advanced down stage. Clearing his throat loudly and blowing his nose as one who sets about an Herculean operation, he began:

"Lay-dees"—he rubbed his palms, rolled his eyes, and turned to nod reassuringly at the other speakers—"and—*gentlemen.*" An emphatic period. He bowed deeply as if applause had interrupted. "It is seldom—" he cocked his head wisely and sent one eye at the ceiling—"if ever—

I repeat—it is seldom if ever that the great county of Essex has been privileged to hear three gentlemen—speaking from the same platform—on the same occasion——” a pause drove home the tremendous coincidence—“three gentlemen of such *great* (another bow massively taken) *deedstinction*.” He bowed twice rapidly and blew his nose.

“What an old bore,” said Ruth.

“He’s charming,” Cecilia pleaded, “I never saw anyone like him.”

For fifteen minutes Chairman Brown hurled his thunderbolts and planted his periods while the gentlemen he extolled sat in varying degrees of temper. Then Hugh caught a hopeful phrase—“it is my very great honor, therefore, to intrroduce to you this afternoon—as the first speaker——”surely this was the end—“a man who——” he was off again! Hugh wiped the perspiration from his forehead; it would take at least fifteen minutes more to “man who” the Senator.

Senator Calhoun, three yards from the thunderbolts and periods, was a picture of repose. His bowed head bespoke deep and statesmanlike thought. He was snoring faintly. The Senator had not expected to speak first. It was his habit to find inspiration for his own speech in the remarks of a predecessor. It was also his habit to take “forty winks.” Not the least of his talents



was a skill at napping any and everywhere without losing track of the transpiring event.

A final sweep, a crowning flourish—and Chairman Brown retired. The Senator rose quickly. There was an electric something about the “little giant.” He was less than five and a half feet tall, with a body symmetrically proportioned. In his close-fitting cutaway which accentuated the nervous energy of his movements, he promised velocity. His face was broad, with blunt features and the drooping nostril of the orator. Removing his eye-glasses and resting one hand on his breast in a manner more deprecatory than dramatic he began speaking in a low voice, without inflection. The back rows leaned forward to hear. His right knee was planted forward taut; the left one gracefully bent. But surely there was no fire in the man; he might have been chanting, so lifelessly came the words! The lifted head, the quiet manner, suggested something detached, distant.

Yet those who were closer could see that his eyes were anything but distant. Small, steely gray, glittering, they were eyes of a man of action, an enthusiast, a fanatic even, but never a dreamer. Now he caught at some new series in the kaleidoscope of ideas racing through his mind; a quick, backward jerk of the torso launched him upon an altogether new elevation of thought and

sound. In a moment the press reporter below dropped his pencil in despair. The Senator was pouring out words, torrents picturesque, beautiful, masterfully alligned. There was never a drop nor pause, eagerly, ceaselessly they came in unbroken currents of sound. He made no gesture. The audience was his now from front rows to tobacco-spitters in the rear; they were fascinated with a suspicion that if once he hesitated or lowered his tone there would be appalling anti-climax, that he must hold the high, persistant pitch or stop. They gasped; it didn't matter what he was saying—here was Sound, beautiful, arresting, compelling Sound, Sound that cast a spell of excitement independent of Sense! The man was more than magnetic; he was hypnotic, holding himself no less than his audience in heroic trance. Now he reached the crest of his theme and ran it into musical, high intonation——

“ . . . . . Now, my countrymen, they have come back, back from their Gethsemane, back from the grim borders of death—come with a new vision and a new faith. In the tortured brambles of Argonne, across the mud-run Flanders plains, athwart the mine-strewn furrows of treacherous seas, they have seen death and something more, known immortal pain and something more . . . . . they have seen a new earth rising from the stench of the old . . . a new

star hovering over the night time of war . . .”

“He’s sweet, isn’t he,” Cecilia whispered, “It’s like going to church and the circus both at once. Ruth, I believe I’m crying.”

“Oratory’s old fashioned,” said Ruth, “this is the age of fact—economic fact.” Her mark in Sophomore economics had been high.

The speaker’s voice was soaring again to a final period— “. . . . When we falter on the portals of a new day, looking helplessly to old rules for guidance and finding that they no longer guide—is it not wisdom, is it not justice, is it not good counsel, to cast our lot with men like Gilchrist Sturtevant—men to whom the Almighty has given the faith and the youth and the resourcefulness and the courage to lead His people to their Promised Land!”

It was over. With a quick bow and shake of the head he sidled back into his chair and assumed again the repose of his first appearance. The applause was thunderous; no need of the watchful trombone now. Even those who were inclined, like Ruth, to scorn the heroics of it were captive to the man’s utter simplicity of soul. To everyone he had brought something and the demonstration ran itself into a weird hysteria.

“Dad says he’s the most eloquent and mistaken man in the Senate,” Henry shouted to Cecilia above the din.

"Could you dream he was like this," she said, "he's so sort of light at parties."

Order returned and Chairman Brown took command again, looking a little outclassed. He lost no time in presenting the next speaker.

Hugh rose painfully, shocked at the very sound of his name. His heart was in his throat, choking him. To Cecilia, who could not endure unpleasantness, he was a sickening spectacle. She averted her eyes again. "It's terrible," she protested, "after Senator Calhoun—he shouldn't have come!"

"Writes better than he speaks," said Ruth, "he'll make a mess of this."

He was standing with heels carefully together and hands gripped in agony behind him. In the forefront of his mind was a great hatred for the man who had provided this slim thing in front of him as a speaker's table. He felt naked, and thought hungrily of a massive stand to hide all of himself except his head. As for his voice—there was no use—it wouldn't work! He cleared his throat in terror:

"The Senator has said too much——" He hesitated. What the devil did Henry Durand mean bringing those girls over here! "—The North Sea wasn't half as bad as this platform——." A dangerous pause. He was desperately alone at a vital instant in a vast space! "——One of the



men whose courage he mentioned happens to be scared to death at this very moment!"

He smiled nervously. A ripple of laughter and relief went over the audience; in his smile they found the cue to their man. There was something unqualified about it with all its shyness—it suggested interesting reserves and brought speaker and hearers into a sort of secret understanding. With better confidence he launched an amusing story which he had had no idea of reciting. More laughter told him the audience was his, was leagued with him to ignore his awkwardness. The rest was easy and in five minutes he had forgotten self-consciousness and was deep in his theme . . .

"... I am asking you to send Gilchrist Sturtevant to Congress because you need him there. He believes in you; he has faith in your capacity to realize all the opportunities of reconstruction; he has himself the ability to help mightily in the task—the energy and courage to wage your battles, down your foes. I am for him because he is not for himself, because he doesn't think of politics as a game but as a summons, because public office is for him another word for public service. I shan't tell you what he stands for because I don't know. I don't believe he knows himself. I don't believe any of us know what we stand for just yet. As the Senator has



said, we are at the frontiers of a new era and the men we choose to lead us now must be pioneers—with the daring of pioneers—with the resourcefulness and faith . . .”

“Oh-h—splendid,” Cecilia whispered so loudly that Henry frowned.

“Vague,” said Ruth.

Ten minutes longer Hugh continued, at times with sudden lapses into awkwardness and again with the fervor and humility of genuine eloquence. When he had said all he had to say, embarrassment settled on him again and his peroration was as painful as his start.

Before the applause died he left the platform and joined the Durand party. Henry shook his hand warmly.

“But what about the issues, Hugh?” said Ruth, “for instance Article Ten of the League—how do you——”

“Jove, I left them in my other coat!” The ordeal was over and he felt amiably flippant. “Its all right, though—Gik’s bursting with ’em. Takes ’em from thin air. Look at the old boy—why, his pockets are full of issues.”

“Hugh—ridiculous!” Cecilia’s eyes triumphed at him from the dark corner of the box.

“Cess—beautiful!” he countered, and seized her hand joyously. She looked confused and withdrew the hand.

"Your man of issues has made a great issue with Deering," said Ruth, "she's in a disgusting humor."

"Gad—has he! He won't say a word!—Probably denounced her in good Saint Paul style. Poor old Buccaneer—he built seven heavens over her and I suppose the dear desperado spilled them. Remember how miserable he was chasing around Saint Marks and the *Club de Vingt* with her? The lad imagined the two of them munching ambrosia and gamboling on the green. Alice is an empty headed little devil though, isn't she Cess!"

"She adores you—Hugh. How ungrateful!"

"Adores her adorable self—God bless her!" said Hugh.

"Alice is a child—never grown up," Henry volunteered.

"Oh, listen—you were young once yourself, old Mariner," Cecilia teased. To which Henry could think of no reply; he was embarrassed with suddenly conceived hero-worship for Hugh.

"For heaven's sake shut up—Gilchrist is speaking," said Ruth.

"Look—oh, look—the Senator's asleep," Cecilia nudged Hugh, delighted.

"I say, he is at that. Bad example—I'll bring him here." Hugh left hastily as the "little giant's" head swung violently sidewise.

Sturtevant had finished his opening remarks. He made a very presentable figure, tall, well-groomed, with a slight stoop which Ruth thought both scholarly and graceful. He seemed taller than Hugh because he carried himself better and his clothes were a better fit. His occasional gestures were natural and gave an impression of control. To Senator Calhoun an audience was a woman—to be lured with sweet speech; to Hugh it was a supernaturally dreadful Specter which might, with luck, dissolve itself into a charitable Confusion. But to Sturtevant it was an adversary—to be skillfully approached, diplomatically disarmed, struck in its weak spots, conquered:

“ . . . never a time when men were more ready to subordinate everything to the prevention of war. I believe we face an opportunity like none that has come before or will come again—an opportunity to organize the world not into a debating society, not into an apologetic Tribunal, but into an effective, supreme League of Nations. I believe that in the President’s Covenant is realized all that is possible to-day in the balance of idealism with fact. I will hear any man’s criticism of this Covenant and remind him that history is not made in a day and that the bird in the hand has a market value of nine in the bush . . .

“ . . . I know, my friends, there are other things whose importance may seem more imme-

diate than international organization. High prices of necessities, the reorganization of our railway systems, the alien radical, Mexico, the still unsettled matter of prohibition, the balance of interests between classes, the right of labor to organize for bargaining——”

Noises in the rear of the hall were diverting the speaker's attention. A towering, collarless figure was trying to make himself heard. Cries of “set down, set down!—put 'im out!” over which the man's voice rose——

“I'll ask ye a question, Mister Sturtevant—and I'll ask it to Mister White, too, settin' behind ye——”

Sturtevant raised his hand for quiet. “All right,” he said, “what is it?”

The man was all eyes—flaming, insistent eyes.

“Ye spoke about classes—I'll ask ye this. What classes is there except the class of them thet work and the class of them thet don't work?”

Mr. White was annoyed. He cleared his throat slightly and beckoned a thick-set, over-dressed individual from the rear of the platform.

“McLanahan—from our shop, isn't it?” he mumbled.

The other nodded.

“Get him out!”

As the over-dressed one started from the platform the coal baron beckoned him back. “No



rough stuff, Hicks—this time. Tell him his daughter hasn't got that school job for life."

Sturtevant was answering McLanahan thoughtfully——

"——in one sense, my friend, I am ready to admit there are the two classes you mention—and for the class who live on other men's toil, reaping where they have not sown, gambling with the misfortunes or necessities of their fellows for a profit they have not earned, I have as little sympathy as you."

Mr. White cleared his throat so loudly that the Durand party in the box turned to look.

"He doesn't like that," Henry whispered.

"No wonder," said Ruth, "its out and out socialism—Sturtevant doesn't know what he's saying."

"——but for the other class—the workers—I have a bigger definition than yours, perhaps. There are brains at work as well as hands, my friend; quality as well as quantity—and there are variations in the value and social importance of it. I want you to know that there are workers who build and workers who destroy. There are self-styled patriots, for instance, whose work divides nation from nation and plunges worlds into war. There are so-called statesmen whose work maintains rotten institutions and denies to science and to thought and to progress their



rightful recognition, halting the earth as still as 'Joshua's moon at Ajalon.' "

Mr. White was listening closely. His lips were tight. In the rear of the hall Hicks was whispering to McLanahan.

"——and there are loose-brained industrial leaders whose work upsets the social peace of a thousand communities, threatens the orderly attainment of social justice, and offers to relieve with chaos the multiplied oppressions of labor——"

Mr. White's face resumed its peaceful stolidity. McLanahan made an eloquent gesture as if about to reply, but Hicks tugged at his sleeve and he turned and left the hall.

On the way back to the platform Hicks was stopped by Henry Durand.

"Who was that chap, Mr. Hicks?"

"Name's McLanahan—John McLanahan. He's a weigher at Bloody Hollow. Always making trouble."

"Why doesn't Mr. White discharge him?"

"Union man. There'd be a walkout."

The speaker was proceeding——

". . . Is it not right, therefore, that of all the problems before us the problem of war should command our first endeavor, our bravest thought?"

"He's so formal," Cecilia complained to Sen-

ator Calhoun whom Hugh had brought back, "but your speech was lovely, Senator!"

"To have you think so is worth making a dozen speeches, my dear Miss Cecilia. *You* inspired me."

Hugh winked at Henry. "Senator—this is a political occasion!"

The "little giant" was not to be bullied out of place. "Point the occasion, sir," he said, "or the man, immune from such inspiration."

"Not I," said Hugh, jubilant eyes on Cecilia, "Call her the modern Cleopatra. With my hand on my heart——"

"Oh, rot!" Ruth's disgust encouraged him.

"——and my heart in my throat!"

"Shut up!"

"——and my throat wide in praise, I, Anthony, confess the Star-eyed Egyptian we foolishly call Cecilia!"

The star eyes were dancing. "Oh—oh, I'm overcome! A fig for you, sir! Save your speeches for the platform—you were stuttering there half an hour ago."

"Look—he's finished!" said Henry.

The audience was on its feet, some standing in place to applaud, others already on the way out. Chairman Brown had gone into a whispered conference with Sturtevant who was nodding vigorous affirmatives.

The speakers were to be hurried away at once for a meeting at Durandville in the evening. The candidate came over for a brief exchange with the Durand party and then was gone with Hugh and the Senator. For him the issue of the moment was the whole moment. Also the Durands were part of that world of which Alice was the core. He had foresworn it.

## Chapter Five

SINCE Henry was the only one of the Essex party with a coherent story of the day Alice forgot her feud and plied him with questions. Was Mr. White there? Were the speeches well received? What had Gilchrist said? She spoke very sweetly of the "great young man" and was especially interested in Henry's account of the McLanahan interruption and of Mr. White's displeasure at Gilchrist's reply. She asked Hicks' name twice.

Arthur Herrick was in excellent humor. While Alice showed Ruth an astonishing dance she and Blaine had improvised to "*The Haunt of the Witches*," the poet sat with Cecilia on the veranda and betrayed himself luxuriously. "She and I climbed Baldy this morning, Cess. Terrific pull! She dropped once—threw herself on the ground and began eating blueberries. Stamina, she has! She and I are going back to town on the early train in the morning."

"Careful, Arthur—most careful," Cecilia pointed a finger at him, "when Mister Vampire

and Miss Vampire climb a mountain—she didn't turn her ankle and have to be carried, did she?"

"Certainly not," said Arthur, "neither did I."

Getting up at six in the morning is like going to Childs' Restaurant. When the act has no routine relationship to reality it can be a charming experience. Such things are burdensome only to those who must take them in earnest. All of the house-party were up at five-thirty to put Alice and Alice's trunks, hatboxes, travelling bags, vanity case, and Arthur on the Washington train. For fashion folk any one of a day's twenty-four hours may be used indiscriminately.

Settled in an empty parlor car Alice bestowed her feet on the adjacent chair and went to sleep. Or so it seemed at least. Her eyes were closed, but from an occasional corner of one of them she made sure that Arthur had a picture of exquisite profile in tenderest repose. Certainly no profile could have been more appealing. No lids and lashes so softly drooping, no cheeks so fair or faintly flushed, no nose so daintily chiseled, no lips so moist and sweet. She was even careful to breathe in just the proper excess. There was fever in Arthur's eyes. He was a poet; in his nature spirit and sense were interdependent. He dreamed over her, remembering other sensualists——



“To lull you ’till one stilled you,  
To kiss you ’till one killed you,  
To feed you ’till one filled you—  
Sweet lips, if love could fill!”

How splendidly she breathed! The trim tailored suit measured every move!

“Pillowed on my fair love’s ripening breast,  
To feel forever its soft rise and fall;  
Awake forever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath—  
And so live ever, or else swoon to death.”

He let his hand rest lightly on her shoulder. The sleeping princess awoke.

“Oh, breakfast? I’m starving.”

He was dumb. A white-clad emissary entered with “first call for breakfast.” Alice scrambled from her chair and seized the poet’s arm.

“Come on, old top. Ye Gods, I’m hungry. I’ll eat anything. My word—air brakes, if they have them.” She hurried him. “Or sand ballast. Railroad ties!”

In the dining car, though, she ordered toast and coffee and, when the waiter had gone, gave herself to the business at hand. The business was Arthur.

“Dreams are odd things. Just now I was dreaming you and I were dancing to “*Haunt of the Witches*” and you were saying something very pretty. I believed I was getting a large kick out of it too.”

Arthur used his napkin hastily, coughed, and slid his hand to hers across the table. "Why be dreaming it, Alice—wonderful Alice—you know I'm mad about you."

For the merest moment she let her gaze melt into his. Then lids fell dreamily over black eyes; she sighed and withdrew her hand.

"What a place to make love! The sugar please."

But he was satisfied. Was there not in her manner a hint of delightful possibilities when time and place were more fortunate!

Back in the parlor car she bought a newspaper and read all the headlines. One corner covered the Essex meeting.

"I was president of my class at Miss Dupont's, Arthur. There was a hot campaign—we pulled strings."

"Rotten game!"

"No, I've always been interested in politics. People are so foolish—its easy."

Arthur fell into a theory. "Art is woman's only game," he asserted. "Manners—dress—music—the expenditure of money—religion."

"You're wandering, old top. I don't understand."

"Women are high priestesses of beauty. It's bad enough that men have to scramble in muck."

"I have a mind, I suppose." She was lured for the moment out of her plan of conversation.

"Not at all," he said. "You'll spoil a lot if you go in for that sort of thing."

She knew nothing of theorists and was irritated. "I'm a human being," she proclaimed, "and I have a darned good mind."

He shook his head. "You were born to be beautiful."

She reddened angrily. Perhaps, because of certain memories, she was over-sensitive. Her own thoughts may have accused her but she blamed the poet. "Born to be beautiful"—she would remember that a long while. Could he mean—it was insulting! She had no doubt that all she really meant to Arthur was the possibility that he might hold her in his arms. She was strangely angry. "Born to be beautiful"—she could dislike him for that.

"Why, what's the matter?"

She frowned, and was off on a new track. "Oh nothing. I was thinking of something else. I shouldn't tell you I suppose——"

"What—angel? Please!"

"I'd rather not."

"Oh, well——" he shrugged.

"It's about Gilchrist Sturtevant." She caught him before it was too late.

"What the devil's all this Gilchrist Sturtevant

mystery? Thought he was Hugh's best friend—great young man and all that.”

“He was—yes. But he wouldn't be any longer if Hugh knew.” The black eyes were snapping now.

“What is it, darling—tell me?”

“Oh, he's common. He isn't a gentleman and of course he wouldn't know how to treat a girl of—well, of my station in life.”

“You've *got* to tell me now.” He was her knight and his voice hissed a little, valiantly.

“It's an unpleasant business—really——”

“What is it?”

“Well, he—he insulted me. He acted as—he treated me as if I were not fit to associate—as if I were a woman of—of the very lowest sort. All because he wanted me to marry him and I couldn't care for him.” Alice turned her head away and Arthur fancied a white, white tear.

“What a rotter!” he said hoarsely, “what a damned rotter! You'll let me handle this, Alice!”

“No, Arthur—it's dear of you.” She touched his hand. “The whole thing is over and he doesn't exist as far as I'm concerned. Hugh and Senator Calhoun and all the decent people in Washington will find out soon enough what type of man he is.”

“You bet they will!”

As the poet was reputed the most picturesque



male gossip in town and the most poetic in license with the truth she was sure the story—or the hint of a story—would travel and grow. So there was an end of that! Perhaps he would really face Gilchrist and make a scene! She hadn't planned it but if Arthur made a fool of himself so much the better. "Born to be beautiful" indeed!

It was raining when they arrived in Washington. The Deering chauffeur and two redcaps conveyed them to the big Pierce Arrow where Mrs. Deering was waiting. Mrs. Deering was in an unhappy humor; it was annoying to have Alice return just now. With daughter away mother could play. To cap her irritation they must wait while Arthur was sent for an afternoon paper.

"You don't seem to realize I'm growing up," Alice explained whimsically. "I suppose my mind is awakening; you've always wanted my mind to——"

"Yes, but not when you're blocking traffic, you little fool!" Mrs. Deering was a practical society woman. In her own way she loved her daughter. Loved her so well she wished her to be the most exclusive, snobbish, callous, enviously discussed and notably married of all the Capital's elect. Consecrated as she was to the social careers of her daughter and herself, no nun ever abjured the mundane world as religiously as did she every cir-



cumstance that might impede her from the "golden round." To such an end no toil, no sacrifice, was too great for this mother's love. A vigorous presence! Her face was purged of everything but scheming, shrewdness and hate. Withal she made a militant figure—this campaigner whom long service had rid of every tender or noble quality. Like Alice's her eyes were black and snapped, but without the daughter's occasional sense of humor. They were fanatic eyes. The Modern Crusader!

"We're late already. I'm giving a dinner. Was George White on the train—he's to come down from Essex?"

"George White! He's chairman of the Democratic something or other."

"Don't be absurd, dear—you know nothing of politics. What are you doing to-night? Not wasting time on this Arthur Herrick!"

The gods were good; they played Alice's game for her. "No, certainly not, mother," she said, "I'm coming to your dinner."

Her mother stared suspiciously. What was the girl about now? "Impossible, child. They're all older people. You'd be extra, anyhow."

"Arthur will come and make it even, won't you Arthur," she smiled at the poet returning with the *Courier*.

He accepted promptly. In the *second* place, the Deerings served wine!

An hour later Alice was comfortably negligée in her own pink-walled room, reading the *Courier*. The sheet was painfully non-partisan; it stood for good weather but would go no further. It was covering the Sturtevant campaign at Senator Calhoun's special request; the editor generally holed out ahead of the "little giant" at Chevy Chase. The front pages to-night were given over to scareheads of race-rioting in the city; there was talk of martial law. On an inside page she found what she wanted—"Democratic Candidate Seeks Labor Support." She learned, without knowing just what she was learning, that Commander Sturtevant had admitted ("ready to admit!") to a mining audience at Bloody Hollow the "right of labor to choose its own representatives for collective bargaining." That he admitted "labor was not a commodity"; that, with qualifying definitions, he believed labor "entitled to the value it adds to a product"; that he had offered a plan for an Industrial Commission as a substitute for the "right to strike" and that this had brought about much heckling from Socialists in the audience.

And so on—for a burdensome column! She was confused and discouraged until a very simple

device occurred to her. Whatever the Socialists liked would not be liked by Mr. George White! She went over the column again, laboriously picking out phrases. "The value labor adds to a product." "Representation by industrial units." "Capital entitled to no return." "State ownership of means of production and distribution." "The right to strike." What a muddle! She hunted up the document she had written after the interview with John Durand and jotted some of the phrases on the back.

Older men, she decided, prefer black. She dressed for dinner in a black gown with a shawl of exquisite black lace. Just before the guests arrived she slipped into the dining room and shuffled the place cards so that Mr. White sat on her right and Arthur on her left.

George White loathed dinner parties. He was present to-night for no other reason than that Mrs. Deering's world accepted his world on suffrance. He despised society folk but he came to their parties out of a vague conviction that in so doing he disproved the legend of superiority they had written about themselves. On this particular evening he was resolved to be comfortably unsociable and to eat well.

He did not know that the young woman on his left had other plans for him. It was an ambush, in fact, for he was no sooner seated than a deadly

fire from Mrs. Adyngton-Sims began to riddle his right guard——

RIGHT (with machine gun effect) “. . . . forgets to make it without on her partner's one club bid. If you play, Mr. White, you know how annoying it is to have anyone in the game who isn't following.”

MR. WHITE grunts. (He is completely hostile.)

LEFT. (A liquid shoulder, engrossed with Arthur.)

RIGHT. “It wasn't that I cared about the score. Of course I only play for money because its more exciting. But so many women can't add. I counted up myself just before we shifted . . . .”

MR. WHITE is eating his grapefruit from a tall goblet.

LEFT. (Still the shoulder. Peals of laughter. Arthur has scored)

RIGHT . . . “It's just as Mrs. Bayne says—you simply *must* concentrate to play. I'm sure you'd do it wonderfully if you were interested, Mr. White . . . .”

LEFT . . . “Shocking! (turns to right) I must tell *you*, Mr. White. I'm Alice Deering—here's my place card. You'll think I'm naughty but its too good——”

MR. WHITE suspends operation and looks at her without a flicker of expression. (It is something, though, to have stopped the attack on the fruit.)



LEFT. (half-voice). "You know Mistanguette, the French dancer, insured her legs for twenty thousand dollars when she came to America. Well, Jean Maurin says——" (the voice subsides to a wicked murmur. It isn't such a naughty story after all but Mr. White is given all the sensations) "—and Mistanguette said, 'mon chere Jean, you mustn't believe all those stories you hear about the President.' "

MR. WHITE looks directly left. (Left is a study in sophistication; she is even lifting her eyebrows) "Well, little lady, that's a live one!" (His grunt is almost cordial.)

LEFT (dropping sophistication pose) "Dear me! Fancy you calling me 'little lady.' I'm twenty-one, you know!"

MR. WHITE. "Huh! Thought you were twenty!" (he guffaws at his facetiousness.)

LEFT. "I'm old enough to vote this fall in Essex County—for Sturtevant. Isn't Gilchrist splendid!"

MR. WHITE. "Suppose so—very fine young man." (He hates being asked for enthusiasm.)

LEFT. "He has such, er—sympathies. We've talked a great deal."

MR. WHITE is once more a picture of unconcern—contemplating the bird on his plate with an eye for operations.

LEFT. "I don't pretend to understand it all but



it sounds quite—oh, noble, you know. ‘The right to strike’—and, what is it, ‘industrial representation in Congress,’ and, er—‘capital is entitled to no return.’ ”

MR. WHITE turns directly left again but his eyes express nothing.

LEFT. “And, er—‘taxation without representation’—no—that was in the revolutionary war, wasn’t it! He says we can learn a lot from the Russian Soviet government.”

MR. WHITE. “He said that.”

LEFT. “Yes, we talk of a great many things because——” (eyelids are lowered prettily)

MR. WHITE. (Attacking his bird with ferocity) “Well, if he’s courtin’ you, young woman, he’s got a good level head on him.”

LEFT reddens and has no reply.

A level head! Why should she take everything the wrong way lately! The man wasn’t referring to money—he wouldn’t dare! Yet, what else could he mean? For the second time in a day something that might have been taken as a compliment struck unpleasantly. Gilchrist hunting a fortune! Well, she might believe anything of him. But the humiliation! All the others who made love to her—were they merely “level headed?” The thought stung her vanity unmercifully. The vulgar old fool! Not Arthur, anyhow! But Arthur was disgusting—“born to be beautiful”

indeed! She felt herself strangely imprisoned between these two men now and disliked them both.

At the foot of the table her father was smiling at her. Ah, she could worship him for that quiet comrade smile! Something big and clean—he was a man—her father!

That there should have been a Mr. Deering in Alice's family was of itself a thing of note. The husbands of most of Washington's "campaigners" are divorced or demented or dead. But Mr. Deering had managed to stick, and, what was more, to keep all the nobilities his wife had discarded. He was a philosopher, a philanthropist, and had his sense of humor—and this, no doubt, explained his survival. Perhaps the only things Mr. and Mrs. Deering had in common were courage and a love of battle. It was natural, therefore, that Alice should have these things in double measure. Catching her father's smile at this moment she felt all her determination surge back; there was no thought that he would despise her project if he knew—only the renewed thrill of contest. She sent him back a strangely passionate smile for her own and turned again to the attack—this time to Arthur.

"Oh, Arthur's falling for the blue widow—Alice is jealous!"

The wine had been red for Arthur. It burned in his cheek and eye.

"Alice, you know—ten blue widows on my left wouldn't balance you on my right!"

"Outrageous! I've lost five pounds. Balance ten blue widows indeed!"

"Trip me up, angel. You're so wonderful to-night I could—oh, you're beautiful!"

She winced at the "beautiful" and sallied into new fields.

"Be careful not to mention what I told you about Gilchrist Sturtevant—when you're smoking after dinner."

The poet made himself as stern as his load of love and wine would allow. "Wouldn't like to meet that cad to-night. He insulted you, Alice, do you know—insulted you!"

Yes, Arthur should have much to say over the cigars! She protested generously——

"After all, I don't believe he's really to blame. Its just that he's picked up a lot of socialistic ideas—sympathizes with this soviet business. I suppose he is obliged to hate the upper classes."

"So that's it—yes, he's a darned red—I might have known it—a bolshevist."

Thus did Alice load him for another shot at the boss of the Seventh Congressional District. Mr. White should hear Arthur too call Gilchrist a radical. Things were going nicely. She signalled the butler to pour the Burgundy again and when the poet's hand reached for hers under the

table she pressed it warmly. Life was good! It was good to be a villainess—good to hate Gilchrist!

Two hours later she woke her maid. There was a telegram which she read while the maid unfastened her dress: “Gik and I arrive to-night full of votes. Nevertheless will Buccaneer meet me lunch to-morrow Saint Marks—Hugh.”

Surely she would! Darling old Hugh! She needed nothing so much!

The maid was gone. The moon shone in the window. Downstairs the clock was striking twelve. Sleep—dreamless, deep-pillowed sleep of one without conscience but with only Love and Hate for guide-stars.



## *Chapter Six*

**H**UGH and Gilchrist arrived in town at midnight. A newsboy thrust his paper through their taxi window. "Race riots sweep City. Police unable to Cope with Situation. Three Whites Killed. Negro casualties Nine."

Gilchrist bought the paper. "I can't believe it! The Capital of the United States! Most of them were in the army a year ago—ready to die for an ideal—now this—beastiality! God!"

"Better drop me at the Post Building; I'll have to write it up," Hugh yawned. "See you at the club for breakfast."

Gilchrist wondered. He had noticed it before; in moments of biting reality Hugh somehow failed of comprehension. Yet a year from now when the riots were old history Hugh's imagination would make them vivid.

They said good-night and the cab moved up Pennsylvania Avenue with Gilchrist. Rounding into Fifteenth Street by the Treasury it stopped joltingly. Gilchrist opened the door. At the corner was a crowd of whites; something was going on but he couldn't see. A little man, hat-



less, was scurrying towards him, and he stepped out onto the sidewalk to wait. The man's left eye was almost closed and one flap of his collar was pulled loose. The hand he raised to signal Gilchrist held the forgotten stump of a cigar. After him some of the crowd were edging up, more curious than anything else. The hatless one explained——

“These hoodlum they have knock a black boy ver' bad up there down. You have the gentleness to permit I take him to be cure in thees taxee?”

Something tightened in Gilchrist. “Jump in,” he said. “Driver, push through there!” The chauffeur hesitated but his fare eyed him so sternly he released the clutch and moved slowly ahead, blowing his horn. The crowd made way. Across the car tracks a negro was lying, face down. The cab stopped and the little foreigner was out in a flash, wildly excited, lifting the negro. The crowd surged in. “Leave him there, you damned Frenchy!” “Git the hell outer the way with that taxi!” “Throw 'em both in the river!” “Say, Jim, let's drag him down to the basin!” A husky youth in an overseas cap cursed loudly and struck full-armed at the foreigner. The blow landed on the little man's eye and sent him trotting pitifully backward. He whimpered and fell against the taxicab, half imprisoning Sturtevant who pulled himself clear and stepped

towards the prostrate negro. The husky one blocked him. "Listen, friend, you and yer taxi and yer frog beat it—and quick—get me?"

Gilchrist was incapable of enough detachment from the moment to be afraid. He was down-stage and the leading man; his lines were written and committed—he had only to speak them. Meanwhile he stood motionless, facing the other, a slim, gallant figure in the street light. There was something uncompromising in the presence he made for now the man in the overseas cap was hulking sidewise uncertainly and his oaths were unmistakably querulous. He drew his forearm back as if to strike, then thrust it into his pocket. Gilchrist spoke quietly:

"Don't pull the gun, old man! You wouldn't do anything with it—because you're afraid!" He looked over the crowd for a moment. Fellow-actors! Supernumeraries! He knew his part and proceeded without raising his voice.

"Cowards—every man of you! A hundred to one against a nigger already down. You call this fair play? I can't believe any man who has ever fought for his country would be mixed in this dirty business!"

Pause! No one knows what to do! Gilchrist, is looking level-eyed at the overseas cap. "I'm going to take this darky to a hospital. If anybody has anything to say about it——" (No one

had anything to say.) "Here you (to the overseas cap)—give me a lift with him!" The fallen leader obeyed sheepishly while the crowd began to laugh, jeer, and yell approval.

Curtain, as the taxicab moves off with Gilchrist and his two wounded inside! The Frenchman regained consciousness before they reached the hospital and except for the battered eye was none the worse for his part. Gilchrist gave him a card and asked him to call the next day. The negro was still unconscious.

Although Drama had waylaid Gilchrist in the street it could not be coaxed to Hugh whose profession it was. After one attempt to write his story he threw a good cigar into the wastebasket and left the office. He could feel nothing of all this—except the holiday spirit. But after he had prowled Ninth and Seventh Streets an hour without adventure, he suddenly found his story and raced back to his desk. Found it in remembering another race riot—in Atlanta—years ago when he was a boy. Under the green-shaded light, with only a brief opening paragraph in mind, he launched his pencil across the white paper and, presto, from the leaden tip his whole story ran! Whatever talent he had was impromptu; he was never so vital or consistent as when he was unprepared. A few facts from the

afternoon papers and all the rest, all the color and atmosphere, from Atlanta! He wrote so rapidly his hand was cramped, but even more rapidly now his ideas marshalled themselves in happy order in advance of the pencil. He finished and sent a copy boy with the sheets to the night operator.

Then suddenly he forgot it all. It was a freak of nerve excitement perhaps that sent him leaping without reason over a thousand days and two thousand miles to arrive unbidden at something remote and sweet. Mountain air flooding a musty, tropic room! Fairyland three years ago! It was unadulterated memory—and only memory—for he asked nothing now of that past. She had been married two years—and he had lightly loved a dozen times since. Because it was only memory, though, it was exclusively his own. And now, in an instant, he was drunk with it. For a long time he stared at the blank wall across the desk, then his pencil moved out again to the white paper and this time it was music that flowed——

“Beloved! I call you that once more. All in a moment—and for a moment—you have come back. Piece by piece I had been forgetting; without my will or knowledge the picture was fading.

‘Life treads down Love in flying, Time withers



him at root!' No other tragedy is above this—that what was noblest, most keen, in life should pass. To-night I will say over again with what excess I loved you—and you will remember. Because of you faith was worth holding, life worth living. What does it matter that I was too bound and weak with it all to hold you, that I could not play the game and would not if I could! You were better lost than baited and trapped by me. These things are nothing now; it only matters that I should forget. I made my prayers to you. I make them to-night again, thank God! And I only grieve that a moment ago and for many moments I had let Time take you away. I will not pretend; for all my pains Time will take you again, I know. This is only one little minute—and I spend it in saying 'I love you.' For this moment I know life was only worth what you could give; there was nothing else anywhere. To-morrow, yes, there will come petty things I will value, but now I can sit here and look high at that other who was myself and was a very God for love of you—and marvel that I can be here so low and there so high. Dearest, dearest, love is such a little word for what passed from me to you—and is passing now!"

The telephone rang. He dropped the pencil and reached for the receiver. Then he stopped, gathered the pages and tore them into many pieces. With such a gesture ended a story which was neither here nor there.



## Chapter Seven

**T**HE dregs of Ninth Street mostly—exploiting circumstance to indulge a sensual appetite for destruction. It isn't often that a chance for vandalism comes accompanied by as plausible a pretense of moral righteousness."

Gilchrist was explaining the riot to Hugh over a breakfast table at the Club. Hugh would rather have read the paper but his friend was determined upon analysis of the mob spirit.

" . . . Young ruffians whose whole scheme of things holds no sense of respect for woman's honor."

Hugh rattled his paper, "*Post* says negroes were firing from windows and automobiles at pedestrians."

"Children! Most of them just out of the army and still childishly arrogant with military experience. They've been harrangued by older negroes, equally childish, fancying themselves leaders of their race and preaching resistance and aggression. Told the negro's day has come and that the whites want to destroy the whole race

for acts done by white men with blackened faces——”

“Gemman to see you, suh—say he wait downstairs.”

“To see me?” Gilchrist asked, “don’t know why—at this hour. What does he look like, Parker?”

“Ah, ver’ peculyer lookin’ suh—allow he might be a furriner.”

“Oh, that’s the man”—he nodded at Hugh, “ask him to come up.”

The Frenchman was more presentable this morning. His face beamed from recent razor and soap. His manner was apologetic. Gilchrist rose.

“Good morning, Mr. er——?”

“Guibert, monsieur. It is that I have come to say thank you.”

“On the contrary, Mr. Guibert, I must thank you for your help in the little—er, misunderstanding. Sit down. This is Mr. Cothran!”

Hugh liked him at once. They shook hands and the visitor settled hesitantly into a chair.

“From France, aren’t you?”

“Now it is France. Mulhouse—in Alsace.”

“There during the war?”

“But no, monsieur; it is when the war occur I make a run away. I fight for *la France*; then I have love that countree. But now——”

the speaker looked at Gilchrist as if for pardon—"it is not the same."

"Why?" Hugh asked. What a wistful, lost manner the man had!

"I have think there are things more big than *la France*."

"You haven't told us how you got into that fracas over the darky last night, Mr. Guibert."

"Darkee? Ah, *oui*—the black man! It is that, *monsieur*—more big than *la France*. I have think it is good to come to thees countree. Thees countree have not fight for the United States, I say, it have fight for all the world, it have fight because all the world is ver' bad hurt. It is when I come on the boat I am think every one here he is good—he fight for who is hurt. But it is not so! *Pardon, monsieur*, there are much who are not here good."

Hugh could have hugged the man, for the vagueness of his altruism and the humble self-effacing gestures. Here perhaps was one who loved his fellow-man without economic or political formulæ!

"What are you doing in Washington?" he asked.

"I make my existence here. Every day I make much translate from your language to mine. It is not good—I speak ver' bad."

"And before the war——?"

“*Avant la guerre!* It is ver’ long—before that war. But no, I make the books at the—what is it you say—yes, at the mine of coal in Alsace.”

Gilchrist was looking at his watch. He had little of Hugh’s love of personalities. The Frenchman rose instantly.

“Now I will say good-bye. It is a ver’ great pleasure.”

“Oh I say, Mr. Guibert,” said Hugh, “we must meet again—tell me where you live.”

A boarding house in southeast was named. Gilchrist extended his hand, “And I thank you again for the very brave thing you did last night.”

Hugh pointed at the patch over the other’s eye, “Good-bye, Mr. Guibert—hope that wallop doesn’t bother you.”

“Wallop! I do not understand. Ah, the blow! It is not much. *Au revoir, messieurs.*”

“Jove, I like that chap!” Hugh smiled after the retreating figure.

“Day-dreaming little fellow. Those hazy ideas will get him into trouble. Maybe old White would give him a job—he worked in a coal mine.”

“Good! You ought, you know. Bet you forget.”

“I have an appointment with White and Martin this morning. I’ll mention it.”

Hugh was glad not to be included in the conference to which the other referred. Such affairs



smacked of organization and, by that token, he hated them and was prepared to plead his luncheon engagement against this one. As it turned out he missed a very lively session. Mr. White was in a bad humor and made more than one apoplectic and apparently irrelevant outburst against the radical trend of labor leadership. Once Gilchrist took issue with him sharply, declaring that he could sympathize with the conditions which gave rise to revolutionary talk even if he could not condone the talk itself. Senator Calhoun and Congressman Martin needed all their diplomacy to keep the peace. It would have been easier if either the candidate or Mr. White had been less outspokenly honest.

Hugh would have been amazed at an accusation of disloyalty to Gilchrist in lunching with Alice. His sense of humor was damning. It weakened his moral judgments; whatever he could laugh at, he could forgive, and he could laugh at almost everything. It was not in him to take so intense and dramatic a man as his friend in complete earnest. In the matter of Alice he rather felt that Gilchrist must have made himself ridiculous. Knowing both of them well he was more amused and interested than partisan. He held a ringside seat at a clash between two vigorous and daunt-



less opposites; his attention was merely a sporting one.

Contrary to his guess and to his past experience Alice was only twenty minutes late at Saint Marks. When the businesses of greeting, finding a table, and ordering food were over he made a little conversation.

“Well, how about the house-party?” He was always like this, she remembered, when they hadn’t met for a long time—half shy, half teasing. With Hugh it was necessary to break the ice. She broke it——

“Hugh, darling, I could fall on your neck!” There was no affectation about her now; that was why she loved Hugh.

“In the name of Saint Mark, Buccaneer—recover! I’ll fall on yours.” His reaction was instant.

“Do you know——” she was inspecting him scientifically, “you have blue eyes and black hair. Yes, if I were not so fond of you I’d fall in love with you!”

“Making excuses!”

“Why aren’t they all like you?”

“I wonder. Have a nut.”

She came back to business. A cold little expression crept over the place just below her eyes where expressions grow. “I’ll tell you something, Hugh.”

"Oh, I say—you *are* in love?"

"Exactly not. Have you ever hated anyone with all your soul?"

"*La même chose, on dit!* Not all." He spoke more carefully. "I hear Gik—er, wasn't very nice?"

The black eyes were snapping again. "If you know—surely—you can't call him your friend now."

Hugh thought a moment. "But I do, Alice," he smiled.

Flames in a famous cheek! "You mean you take his side? I'm sorry, Hugh, but you must choose!"

He ignored the snappings and flame. "Dear devil," he said gravely, "I couldn't choose—I'm too damnable fond of you both. Gik is all sorts of a fool about women. Wants one he can say his prayers to." He stopped to drink a glass of water, then laughed into the black eyes. "And the joke is that he stumbled on a blooming Buccaneer with a coral cutlass in her teeth. Will you sip a bit of soup, Miss Devil-may-care!"

The storm passed. She was laughing too. "Darling, if you won't fight I can't. But take care of your gallant candidate—the coral cutlass might be put to work."

"Don't do it, pirate! A cutlass is too picturesque for that. Besides you'd have to clutter up

your sea-roving brain with all sorts of musty things not in a pirate's line."

She winced a little at this. Perhaps Hugh too was thinking her nothing more than pretty and rich. But no—positively! She *must* believe in Hugh. She gossiped about the fall débütantes——

"They're all fat. Don't say I'm cattish—you'll see."

"Best to start that way. Didn't they always fatten up the Egyptian slave girls before the sales came off?"

"Vulgar! You'll fall in love with the first one who wants you to."

"I daresay, O wise and beautiful! I won't even wait for her to want me to—there might be, er, embarrassing delays."

"Two-faced! I hope the Prince of Wales takes your heart's temporary delight. Even Hugh Cothran can't compete with a Prince."

"Oh I don't know—if I feel all right! When does he come?"

"November. Stella Chambers bet me fifty dollars she gets his photograph and dances with him five times."

"Stella! First flapper of Washington!"

"You don't know. Stella has real stuff."

"You bet she has!"

"Somebody told Myrtis he was going to Hot

Springs later on and her mother has engaged a suite of rooms there. Efficient, I say! Blaine Todd's furiously jealous."

" 'If I were king, ah love, if I were king,' " Hugh quoted, "Why should Blaine worry. His Royal Highness can't take her ducats. It reads well, though,—jealous of Wales."

Alice was delighted, "I believe—why yes, certainly—they come both male and female, don't they?"

"What?"

"Cats!"

Hugh blushed. He was ashamed of what he thought of Blaine.

"Well, as long as the Prince doesn't tamper with our pirate——" he said lamely, "you haven't designs too?"

She lifted her eyes ceilingward. "I shall be polite. If His Highness is sensitive to beauty and maidenliness, who am I, prithee, to turn my head up—or away?"

"Modest creature! Violets—every morning!"

Myer Davis' orchestra was playing "*Sambre et Meuse*" and Hugh remembered Pierre Guibert. He told her of the little Frenchman.

". . . manner of having escaped from himself. He's so unselfconscious about it. Doesn't want to uplift his fellow man particularly, or put him into any new system. Gik thinks he's in just the



vague, exalted state to jump at any sort of revolutionary nonsense that's put in his way. The thing that gets you is his humbleness; he simply wants to help—anywhere. Gik's asking old man White to give him a job at Bloody Hollow.

Alice caught at the last words. "What's his name?"

"Pierre Guibert. Comes from Alsace. Was a sort of bookkeeper in a coal mine."

"How interesting." She spoke as if it were not really interesting at all. But she fixed the name—Pierre Guibert!

## *Chapter Eight*

ONE month, two months, three months, and the candidate was still at it. There were too many "votes" in his district. The farmer vote, the labor vote, the vote of the wealthy landholder, the very important vote of George White—and finally Gilchrist's own vote of conscience and conviction. To reconcile the viewpoints represented by these "votes" was a discouraging task. Mr. White, particularly, was proving a thorn in the flesh. Wherever it was possible to see socialism in liberalism he saw it, was obsessed with it. He refused to distinguish between Gilchrist's championship of individual liberties and the doctrines of those whose individual liberties were being denied. A day after the candidate had scored the New York legislature for its refusal of duly elected Socialists he had a curt letter from Mr. White. On another occasion when he denounced "government by injunction" in the coal strike there was a two hundred word telegram. And when he criticized the Attorney-General for deportations of alien radicals he was

summoned to a long distance phone for discipline——

“Essex County *Post* says you attacked the Administration for exporting foreign trouble-makers. Did you?”

“I criticized Palmer—yes.”

A dead wire. The other end had rung off. The only immediate consequence was that the *Gazette* which was Mr. White's paper had no account of Gilchrist's next speech. The speech was covered though by the *Bloody Hollow Liberator*, a socialist organ, which continually spoke of Gilchrist as the “coal company candidate.”

All of which might have discouraged another man. But more than ever before in his life Gilchrist was living in the moment. Before him were political storm clouds and behind were the rocks upon which Alice had wrecked his single emotional venture. Yet he stuck to the immediate tasks. All his life he had taken care of the day and the morrow had taken care of him.

For Alice he believed there were no regrets now. But for the emotional wreckage he was aware of a horror that forbade examination. As soon as he permitted himself to see that the woman about whom he had built his romance did not exist he had no interest left for the real Alice. Nothing weak resulted; a strong nature may be embittered but not demoralized by such an ex-

perience. It was not the sort of thing he could talk to Hugh about for he knew that in his place Hugh would have made something heroic of the recollection.

Late in September he spoke again at Bloody Hollow. The industrial court plan had taken its form mainly from the opposition that rose against it and now he could speak of it concisely.

“If you send me to Congress I promise you a bill to establish an Industrial Commission. Into its hands should come final jurisdiction of every question properly arising between capital and labor where the public interest is apparent—with, of course, the constitutional limitation that appeal might be taken to the Supreme Court of the United States. The Commission should sit to adjudge, not to arbitrate, and its personnel should consist not as heretofore of equal representation for capital, labor and the public but of men schooled in impartial study of industrial questions. How would such men be found, you will ask? It would be difficult at first, I am ready to admit, but the term of office should be for life and there would develop in time a body of men devoted to the study of industrial law as we have to-day men devoted to ordinary law. No prejudice arising from an earlier and different occupation or from anticipation of a future and different occupation could attach to men of such class. But,



you will say, there can be no courts without laws or statutes or precedents for guidance. True—and the first act of the Industrial Commission should be the enactment of a Magna Carta of industry. We can guess what that Magna Carta would contain. The Commission would write into it first, I can fancy, the old battlecry of Unionism—‘labor is not a commodity.’ (Applause) They would write that the liberty of an individual to quit work should not be abridged. . . .”

There were many questions after the speech. Gilchrist always enjoyed this part of the program no matter how tired he might be. While he was answering one interrogator he recognized Pierre Guibert in the audience. So White had given him a job after all! In the excitement of recent weeks he had forgotten the little man. At the close of the questioning Pierre came forward accompanied by a hard-featured gentleman whom Gilchrist thought he had seen before. In spite of the humbleness there was a hint of antagonism in Pierre’s manner. Remembering how Hugh had liked him Gilchrist yielded to an impulse——

“Come and have dinner with me at the hotel, Mr. Guibert. I’ve nothing until midnight. We had an interesting talk, I remember.”

Pierre hesitated and introduced his companion—Mr. Hicks.

“It is kind, yes, but if Monsieur Sturtevant will be good I will prefer he come to my house. There are friends for whom it will be much pleasure.”

Gilchrist disliked having his plans altered by others. Still this would be rather an adventure. Queer little chap! He decided to accept the invitation.

The Frenchman led the way down Diamond Avenue, turning off presently into a side street which crossed the railroad tracks and skirted the shutes and hoists of a coal mine. Mr. Hicks had disappeared. Ahead of them squatted row after row of lifeless little houses all of the same design and color. Gilchrist was surprised; surely White had given Pierre a better position than required living in one of these ghastly boxes!

“Where did your friend Hicks go?”

Pierre made a gesture of impatience. “Always the same,” he said, “he will not come to my house. It is not to be comprehend; he have told me of thees ver’ house to live. For me he have do much; he have say he is ask by friends in Washington to look me out.”

A dirty white cat was eating something on the edge of a mud puddle under a lone street lamp. Gilchrist began to think it all very unpleasant.

“*Oui, monsieur,*” said Pierre, guessing this, “it is not pretty, thees place. But there are much people live here.”

“Why don’t you live in a better quarter?”

“My friends are here.” There was just a hint of defiance. “It is because of that Mistaire White. Him I do not like. He is the big boss. My friends have make much money for him and he have make that it is bad smell here and not music.”

They were turning in at one of the little boxes. Now for stale perspiration, cheap tobacco smoke and a mess of corned beef and cabbage, Gilchrist thought, and braced himself!

The door opened on a room that was apparently parlor, dining room and kitchen combined. It had wallpaper—cool green without designs. There was one picture—of a Spanish seashore with living blues, yellows and browns. He knew the picture; a *Sorolla*. He could not see the “Compliments of New York Times Magazine Supplement” in the lower corner. Behind a screen at the rear someone was cooking—but not corned beef and cabbage. There was a table and three chairs. A long gaunt man of about fifty with pale features and very bright, bloodshot eyes was reading a newspaper. Gilchrist recognized him at once—the man who had interrupted his first speech at Essex! From behind the screen a girl appeared with a bowl of soup. The handles of the dish were hot and she was holding them with the hem of her skirt so that Gilchrist

was aware of a clean white petticoat, black stockings neatly darned in two places, and black slippers. She had brown eyes and very live brown hair parted in the middle and knotted on the crown of the head. He noticed her ears; he hadn't seen many girls' ears; these were small and very white. The man and the girl both looked indubitably clean.

Pierre made the introductions with much ceremony—John McLanahan and Anne, his daughter. McLanahan was a weigher at the mines. Gilchrist shook hands and thought of Hugh. This was an experience! Anne arranged another place at the table (now a dining table) and they sat down to supper.

The soup was excellent. There was little else. Pierre uncovered great conversational range and talked incessantly. When Gilchrist joined in it was after the manner of a man feeling his way in the dark. There was something hostile about McLanahan; his contributions were limited to short, unsmiling sentences. The girl did not talk at all in the beginning but was perfectly self-possessed. Once she laughed at one of Pierre's odd efforts.

"Do you like Bloody Hollow, Miss McLanahan?" Gilchrist asked.

She was surprised. "Why, I don't know. There's so much to do." She thought it over a



moment as if it were more than a conversational question. "I like the people here, yes. I like father and Pierre."

Gilchrist had little of Hugh's love of personalities; his passion was for ideas. Yet he was struck with the composure and character in the girl's face. He compared it with another face and fancied that from this one life had washed all vanity and self-consciousness.

When the meal was finished she cleared the table and retired behind the screen to wash dishes. A checkered cloth was drawn over the table. McLanahan lighted a pipe and Pierre produced a crushed package of Piedmont cigarettes. Gilchrist accepted one and held a match for the other to the accompaniment of bows. McLanahan was first to launch the inevitable politics.

"Ye're a nice speaking man, Mister Sturtevant, but ye ain't on to things in this district. Folks is tired of what ye're giving 'em—talk of justice and industrial courts."

"I don't understand," said Gilchrist, letting Pierre's cigarette burn away—he loathed Piedmonts, "you aren't in favor of fair play between capital and labor?"

The miner's eyes burned. "Justice," he said slowly, "is what we're goin' ter take—not what you're goin' ter give us?"

"Thees justice is not good," Pierre joined ex-

citedly, "there is a friend over the street, he work hard, his wife work hard, she is sick, there is not money for the operations, a little while she die."

"But what do you propose, Mr. McLanahan?" Gilchrist was more interested than argumentative. The miner laid down his pipe and put both hands flat on the table.

"Look ter Russia fer that," he said, "the proposal ain't mine. There's nothin' labor gets she don't take—and we're goin' ter take what's ours here same as they're takin' it in Russia."

"What will you take?" Gilchrist felt a certain shame. This man's words, however untrue, came from a bitter realism. He was suddenly uncomfortable in his tailormade clothes and Frank Brothers shoes.

"What're we goin' ter take! Everything—because we make everything. This is the richest country in the world and all of it was made by labor. All we've got ter do is stand up and take it—and, by God, we'll do it!"

Gilchrist knew the story by rote. Yet this man gave it a new force, a sinister, heartbreaking force. Here were mental and emotional qualities which spelled leadership,—for better or worse. Behind the screen, at work over her pots and pans, the girl was singing! The voice had a vitality strangely like — and unlike — her father's——

“There are smiles that make you happy,  
There are smiles that make you sad——”

Vaguely he felt that she was a living refutation of her father. He remembered how she had laughed at supper—laughed like one who had learned to expect nothing of life and was too cheerful and busy to worry. McLanahan was voicing a doctrine which threatened all of civilization yet Gilchrist had to force his reply——

“I do feel, Mr. McLanahan, that the injustices which have brought about such an attitude as yours must be very great and must call for very positive readjustments.”

“It is not for himself, he speak,” Pierre explained, “it is for his friends he ask thees thing.”

McLanahan’s fist pounded the table. “Christian Socialism again, Guibert. Ye’re wrong. I ask it for myself. I’m with the others ter get it for myself.”

“How do you propose to give labor all you say it deserves? What is the limit?”

“There ain’t any! If ye mean increased wages, they ain’t ter be any wages—er any wage slaves. When we get these damned reformers outter the A. F. of L. and the United Mine Workers ye won’t hear no more about wages and commissions and arbitrations and all that. The unions’ll own everything—none of yer government regula-

tion. And every dollar ter the man who done the work!"

Gilchrist felt again that he and McLanahan were reciting an old familiar dialogue. Anne had reappeared and was reading a book. He could just see over her shoulder from where he sat—it was Jeffrey Farnol's "Broad Highway." "Bloody Hollow Public Library" was stamped on the page. It was hard to remember his lines, but McLanahan had paused.

"What about the rest of us, though?" he countered with a sense of reciting. "Most people don't belong to labor unions or even to the laboring class. Your program is class legislation—you want an autocracy of labor."

Against the even friendliness of his manner it was impossible to sustain violence of speech and the miner modified his tone. "The working class is the only class there is—when things is right. You got ter get a whole new way er lookin' at things, Mister Sturtevant. All the people that work belong ter the working class—in spite er some of 'em being 'shamed ter admit it. Purty soon ye'll see them thet works for salaries en thinks they don't belong ter the working class tryin' to slip in the back door. Well, it'll be last come last serve. En all the rest—folks thet live on what other folks make for 'em—they kin



starve. That's about it—starve. Ye're right—autocracy of the working people!"

Pierre was nodding approval. Gilchrist roused himself. The vague sympathy he was feeling for McLanahan's position was treason to things he held fundamental. Eager speech came back to him——

"You speak from your heart, I know—and your experience. But think, man, even if you were right this is not the time to preach upheaval. The world's about to starve. Look what infinite suffering would come to the very people you speak for if your plan, with its inevitable disorganization of productive forces, were brought about to-day! That alone should stop you for the present. And the plan—can you point Russia seriously as an example of its success? The best we can say of Russia is that we don't know what will come out of that chaos. You're forgetting, McLanahan, that we've gone too far to start all over again. What man or group of men can work out in a few days or years a substitute for the economic and social systems to which centuries of practical experience have brought us? Even if such a thing were possible you begin with a false definition of work. There's quality as well as quantity in work—heads as well as hands. The whole of history is a record of people with heads winning out over people with hands. Set up your

system and in a little while the men with brains and imagination and courage will begin to take things away from the others. It will always happen unless you breed men of exactly equal ability and you can't—the testimony of four thousand years says you can't!"

Pierre walked up and down the room counting on his fingers. "I will tell you some little *mathematiques*. Every year Mistaire White have one, two, three hundred thousand dollar and my friend have not one thousand dollar. Mistaire White he is not so much more ability than my friend like that! *Non?*"

"Right!" said Gilchrist, "right you are, Mr. Guibert. No man is three hundred times as valuable to society as another man. Its a matter of degree there and I am ready to admit that the differences in men's fortunes to-day are not justified by the differences in their contributions. Levelling those differences should be the motive of our graduated income taxes—the revenue is an incident."

The Frenchman looked a little puzzled. McLanahan was a picture of a mind entrenched beyond mortal assault. Gilchrist consulted his watch, and rose, with an unsatisfactory feeling that the conversation had brought them nowhere. He was sorry not to have talked to the girl; she

seemed no more of her father's world than of his own.

"Good-by, Miss McLanahan. Will you vote for me?"

She closed her book and shook hands. "If Pierre will," she said soberly. "Thank you for coming, Mr. Sturtevant—father has enjoyed talking with you. You—you'd like father." The subjunctive was eloquent. Gilchrist laughed and thought of Hugh again.

Pierre walked with him to the hotel. There was something on his mind. He talked of Anne's mother who had been a social worker and artist. The mother had died when her daughter was born.

"It is ver' wise girl you have see there," he said cautiously, "since two year she feenish the—what is it—the school of high. She have read much books."

"What does she do now?"

"In the school—she instruct. *Mais non*, Mistaire Sturtevant, she is deeferant. It is not good here—she is *gentile*. Always there is nothing she do not know before; always she do not understand that she is tired."

Gilchrist remembered her laugh and her song. She *was* different! What a destiny—Bloody Hollow!

"Does she mean to stay here?"

Pierre clutched his arm. "She have no wish, *monsieur*. Perhaps she theenk one do not leave thees place—ever. But I have theenk—you have procure for me these work——"

"Would she come to Washington?"

The Frenchman wrung his hand madly. "Ah—you have discover my thought. It would be kind—ver' kind—I would be glad."

Gilchrist looked at him curiously. Was he in love? Not in the ordinary sense certainly. It would be hard to imagine this altruistic creature doing anything as egotistic as falling in love. He clapped him on the back so vigorously that Pierre coughed.

"That's an idea, Guibert. I'll look into it and let you hear from me."

"Strike me on the neck!" Pierre sputtered, "*monsieur* is ver' kind."



## *Chapter Nine*

**W**ASHINGTON is born twice each year. In the spring there are cherry blossoms on the Speedway, dogwood in Rock Creek park, marble and moonlight in the Aztec Gardens of the Pan-American, automobile couples parking and sparking along the Potomac Shore. But in October there are the summer exiles returning—from Bar Harbor, Michigan, Europe—to map the winter campaign and direct the early social maneuvers which precede the major operations of December and January. It is Nature which dies in the winter and is reborn in April but it is the Spirit of the City which lies prostrate in summer to stir again in October. “In April,” Arthur Herrick declared cryptically, “I am a Pagan. In October a Christian Scientist.”

At Chevy Chase Club they were dancing while Boernstein played. The little orchestra leader with poetry in his face and the very devil in his violin was fiddling his heart away in ragtime for the light-footed couples floating by. Even Chevy Chase Club is youthful in October. The wine in the eye comes from summer suns (in

December it comes from Baltimore); the sub-débutantes smoke cigarettes from honest nervousness, not from habit; and their dowager mothers who are to apply rigorous systems later on are still in seclusion. Intrigue, Scandal, Morbid Sentiment, Weariness, Jealousy, Ambition, are half asleep in October. No wonder Boernstein plays so!

Inside the clubhouse—motion, laughter, light. Outside, the splendor of moon-swept lawns and the cool majesty of autumn night! Modestly the stars keep place; magnificently the wide moon strides the heavens; stealthily the things of earth play up! Two figures pass the white columns of the veranda and come soft-footed across the grass. Now they creep cautiously hand in hand, now separate and run apart down a vague grassy slope, join hands again and dance a mad step on the sward,—break, and one is pursuer, one pursued, until they come to a twisted bench upon which moon and stars play and over which Boernstein's far fiddle floats.

"Ah moon! This woman is mad and I with her!"

"Stars—you are winking—I understand—Hugh Cothran is a silly, silly, *silly* boy!"

"Moonlight, kiss her,—or I shall!"

"Starlight, strike him or I——"

"Moon—ah, moon! She has a rose in her hair. It's for me."

"A couple of stars—save my rose!"

"Old moon, I say, light up a bit and look! Its Cecilia, the sub-deb, with an organdie dress and a rose! The rose is mine!"

Silence. The moon is broad and tolerant; the stars merely twinkle. Boernstein is playing "*Sola Mio.*"

Voices approaching, come nearer, and are passing towards the clubhouse. A bunker intervenes.

FEMALE VOICE. Ah—cut it! You can't kiss me all night. Give me a cigarette!"

"Stella Chambers!" Hugh whispered.

"Listen! It's the next dance. Promised Hen. Let's run—whew!" and Cecilia is up and off, white slippers twinkling in the grass. At the veranda steps she waits for Hugh to come up. "For you and the moon—from the stars and me!" The rose lies at his feet and she is gone. October madness!

Exit the Frolics; enter the Conspirators! In a very far and very dark corner of the same veranda—Arthur Herrick and Alice Deering. No moonlight idyll theirs; they talk soberly as befit actors in a vital drama. Arthur is doing most of it——

"Hicks is the mine detective. He wrote me

that as soon as he got my letter he looked up Guibert and found him a place to live with McLanahan—the man they're watching. When Sturtevant spoke at Bloody Hollow Hicks went to the meeting with Guibert. After the meeting Guibert went up and spoke to Sturtevant and the two of them left the hall together. Hicks followed them to McLanahan's house and waited outside an hour. Then he left."

"Has he told Mr. George White?"

"Evidently not. I've written him to mention Sturtevant's visit merely as part of his report on McLanahan's activities. Oh, er, by the way—I cashed your check myself and sent Hicks the money—safer that way."

"Did you say something about a girl?"

He would rather have left that out. It was inartistic. But the question was direct.

"Yes. Er, Hicks said that a week after this happened McLanahan's daughter—very pretty girl—packed her duds and left for Washington. And that the Frenchman said Sturtevant was going to take care of her. I told him to tell White that too. Must say, I hardly thought Sturtevant was that sort."

"He isn't," said Alice promptly.

She had learned much in four months. Her conception of conspiracy was high and led her into strange pastures. At first her understanding



of the rôle had called for "facts"—to be "well informed" like the English woman at week-end parties or the French woman in her *salon*. She read newspapers voraciously and indiscriminately. And pumped Arthur—the poet had his positive if erotic theory on every topic and in the course of time she acquired a strange sort of "education" from him. The decadent school of poetry, the politics of materialism, the philosophies of Shaw, and even the intricacies of an oil speculation with which Arthur was toying as a kind of sop to the side of his nature which accused him of over-aestheticism. Lately, however, his pupil had come to an irrelevant conclusion that character and proper valuations counted more than information. Thenceforth Arthur found his judgments generally rejected though his "facts" were still received.

Of course it was all a bore, she told herself, and as soon as the election was over she would patch up her quarrel with Stella and begin to live again.

"Do you—hate him as much as you did?" Arthur asked.

Boernstein was playing "*Elegie*." She mused, calm as philosophy. "After all," she asked "what is hate? I don't know."

"Two theories. Hate is repulsion or hate is

attraction like love requiring the presence of an objective. Freud——”

“I want him in reach every minute—I want to hurt him—hurt—hurt!” she interrupted passionately.

Arthur pressed her hand and held it. “Angel, dear angel—you can hate so—can’t you love a little bit!”

She was thoughtful. “Not even a little, Arthur. Rather too bad, isn’t it?” A year ago she would have been incapable of this philosophical bitterness.

Her hand was warm in his. She was quite practical about sex. Once it had been a play-thing; now it was a weapon in whose effectiveness she had unwavering faith—a weapon to be wielded lightly or heavily as occasion required. She was too young in the possession to think the weapon less than sure or to know with what infinite delicacy it must be wielded in the finer battles.

Her hand was warm in Arthur’s but her thoughts were roaming the Seventh Congressional District. There was so much to worry about—and the election two weeks’ off!

“The Seventh is usually Democratic, isn’t it?”

“Gave Jones a small majority two years ago, yes. But Sturtevant’s Wilson politics will lose him lots of votes—Democratic ones too. On the

treaty question Hodges is for 'ratification with reservations'—good safe ground—'with reservations' is a catch-all—it may mean anything. He's taking votes from Sturtevant every day. And Trachtenberg, the Socialist, is calling him 'White's Minion' and 'The Coal Company Candidate'—effective stuff, you know!"

"He'll hardly be 'White's Minion' if Hicks makes his report, will he?" Alice snapped her jaw in exactly the way she remembered Gilchrist doing it.

The poet's arm had been sliding along the banister. Now it compassed her bare shoulders almost imperceptibly.

"Sturtevant may find every element in the district down on him," he said, ignoring (as accidental and of no consequence) the *Aenead* of his arm, "no limit to what old White'll do if he believes Hicks, but you can bet he'll give up his candidate before he'll give up his coal company."

The Political Expounder's arm drew its content closer now and Expounder kissed Expoundee—"—if he does repudiate Sturtevant he'll do it on the quiet—no public statement—just a few orders to his people and the trick's done—that's what makes—politics—so—fascinating—to me—Alice—darling——"

"Arthur, you're kissing me!" she informed him

coldly and brought the political *tête-a-tête* to an end. Political it was—all of it.

A moment later she was dancing—with Hugh—inside. How she loved Hugh!

Boernstein was playing "*Haunt of the Witches.*"



## *Chapter Ten*

**I** AM not interested in this election—White.” Chairman Brown had asked Mr. White to be present at Essex when Sturtevant made his final election-eve speech. This was the answer. It troubled Mr. Brown. It was highly irregular. It cramped his oratory when he introduced Gilchrist, dimmed his appreciation of the candidate’s ringing enthusiasm, and sophisticated his faith in the loud and loyal applause of the farmer audience.

On the way to the train after the meeting he showed Gilchrist the telegram. The other’s indifference perplexed him still further.

“I calculate if it’s a little misunderstanding, I might——”

“Thanks, no, Mr. Brown,” Gilchrist anticipated him dryly. “There’s nothing to be done—I expected it. I’m afraid he and I are as far apart as our friend McLanahan and I. At another time this might have been serious but not now. The lines along which we’re fighting this election are too long to be dominated by any party organization.”

"He's a purty big man. It——"

"I have complete confidence. Mr. White represents the old school of politics—this is a new era—the electorate's awake." He was irritated at the other's nervousness.

"Hope so but I dunno," said Mr. Brown apologetically. "I dunno."

But Gilchrist's faith was immune. It was a faith in himself and his destiny more than in the electorate. He had never yet failed. He never would! To every struggle he brought a subconscious conviction that victory was a thing he might command from sheer intensity of his individual will.

He sat in the empty smoking room while his berth was being made up, and permitted himself to relax. To-morrow—New York—and Hugh! Hugh was coming over to Millicent Bronson's début party. There would be many of the Washington people there. Perhaps Alice! He would be perfectly pleasant and easy with Alice. And at night Hugh's supper party! Hugh had promised him that on election night. Good old Hugh! It would be balm to bathe away the stains and wearinesses of the last few months in Hugh's easy philosophy. He felt indulgent. He would subordinate himself tomorrow to the whims and foibles of his friend, pretend himself for a day a man like Hugh—only an eyewitness to the great

movements of the period, truly concerned with nothing but individuals! Yes, Hugh was the delightful sort of chap who could never be President of the United States but who might with utter unconcern clap a President on the back and be his best friend. Gilchrist even followed this thought a little.

Morning found him no less indulgent. He patronized New York. Pushing through crowded subway doors with Hugh, dodging across thundering traffic, laughing with his fellows at a vaudeville, he pretended himself a little human creature like all the rest of New York, lost in the great mass of humanity like the rest—and knew that he was only pretending. He could enjoy this game of littleness because fathom deep in his consciousness was the knowledge that he was big and that even as he permitted New York to swamp his individuality Destiny was marching to the polls with an even larger one for him. He loved Hugh! He loved New York! Loved his fellow-man pushing and bumping him from every direction. There was inspiration in the unconcern and bigness of the city—in its very unfriendliness! He was a conqueror! He had even conquered Alice!

She was not at the Bronson affair. He believed he was politely sorry. Spying her father across a refreshment table with John Hampton from Washington, he tugged at Hugh's arm and

they went over to greet the older men. Gilchrist admired Robert Deering. In the old days he had loved to identify in the daughter certain qualities of courage and generosity he found in the father. The liking was mutual; Gilchrist had a knack with older men—if he thought them worth it. Where Alice had found heaviness her father had found dignity; the earnestness that bored her captured her father. The mutual admiration was enhanced perhaps by a dearth of common interest. Mr. Deering disliked politics and Gilchrist had no notion of science or business.

To-day, though, Gilchrist was patron of all arts—even the art of patronizing. After the party he and Hugh walked with Mr. Deering and his lawyer back to the hotel. Mutual goodwill determined Gilchrist to talk of finance and Mr. Deering to talk of the election.

“Infernal jam at the Bronson’s,” said the older man, “just dropped in. I was in college with Bronson.”

“Over on business, I suppose?”

Mr. Deering stopped to buy a paper. “Yes, John Hampton’s getting me in the newspapers again. Trust a lawyer.” He stopped under a street lamp to read, careless of curious glances from passersby. “Now look at you, John—crowding out election news. Don’t you know they need this front page for Gilchrist to-day.”



Over his shoulder they read—" \$15,000,000 Syndicate to Develop Oil Lands. Western Leasing Company backed by Deering Interests. To Exploit Properties under Oil Leasing Law."

"There's politics and journalism for you," said Mr. Deering and put the paper in his pocket. "Rotten professions!"

"Oh, I say, Mr. Deering——" Hugh protested, "you're on my toe."

"Mine too," said Gilchrist, smiling.

"He's really on two of my toes, Hugh," John Hampton explained, "Somebody pulled a few wires in the newspaper offices and at the Capital—he blames me. Always does."

"You're right about politics, Mr. Deering," said Hugh with malice, "it takes everything and gives nothing. Better a man is the sooner it betrays him."

Gilchrist accepted the challenge. "I might say," he parried, jauntily, "that in the journalist you have a picture of one who starves himself to death for the right to a top-gallery, back-row seat at the show."

Both of them felt that the smiles with which they spoke excused them for saying what they really thought.

Mr. Deering was silent for the rest of the walk. Once or twice he looked sharply at Gilchrist and then at Hugh as if something puzzled him. He

did not speak until they were about to separate at the hotel.

"If its romance you want," he said earnestly and *apropos* of nothing, "all of that is in the world of business to-day." He hesitated, avoiding John Hampton's eye. "Now if you young men were willing I could show you a big field—a useful field." He drew the newspaper out of his pocket and turned it over in his hands. "This is the age of oil. Next war'll be won with oil. Here's patriotism and profit combined—and romance. I—I could use you both in this——"

Gilchrist snapped his jaw. Hugh grinned.

"Public life is a service to which I have dedicated myself too often to desert it now," said the candidate, thinking of the morrow.

Hugh was remembering Arthur Herrick. "I know a poet who's digging oil," he said, "no use for me though—can't make a rhyme to save me."

Final editions of the afternoon papers announced Sturtevant leading by a safe margin in returns from the first county of the ten in his district. The county was Essex.

The Essex County *Blade* was one of the papers for which Hugh corresponded. He had arranged with them to telegraph election returns direct to the Plaza, where they would be delivered at his supper party.

Covers were laid for twelve. Hugh was going to do this handsomely if it bankrupted him. Millicent Bronson's début party had been opportune in bringing so many of his friends from Washington.

Much wine flowed. In the back of Hugh's mind was a notion that he would allow himself much leeway in that direction to-night. Occasion of a lifetime! Nerve-wracking too, this toast-master business! Myrtis Bayne sat by him and he took her glass when she refused. Across the table from them was Winship Tennant. Winship had a good start; there had been some private stock in Blaine Todd's room earlier. Blaine sat on the other side of Myrtis and concentrated on looking substantial. Gilchrist was at the head of the table near Hugh; at the other end was Stella Chambers with Captain Granville of the British Embassy on her right.

Three courses—and the first telegram from Essex came. Hugh glanced at it and pushed back his chair, coughing for silence. He was charmingly nonchalant:

“Fellow Democrats and Republicans——”

Winship and Stella applauded. Winship waved his napkin.

“——Good fortune has made me your toast-master on a most felicitous occasion! The modest young man at the end of the table who is just

now selecting from his delicatessen shop of words a few modest tidbits for your nibbling after I am finished, is in a most peculiar position. Little as you may believe it, the young man has been hounded from youth. If you will note him, ladies and gentlemen, you will guess at once that he is a victim—a victim of his own magnetic qualities. He can't get away from them! I have heard—I believe it was Winship Tenant who told me—that some men are born great——”

“That's good, I say,” Stella interrupted loudly, “greatest day of your life, Winnie—day you were born!”

“——I have heard, too—and Blaine Todd is my authority—that some achieve greatness. Blaine was on his way to lunch with the lady who sits on my right——”

Stella was irrepressible. “Ah-h, some do and some don't. What did he say *after* lunch? Speech from Myrtis!”

Hugh was extending an eloquent arm at Stella. “——And I am reliably informed—by Stella herself—that some have greatness thrust upon them. When His Highness, the Prince of Wales, asked the ineffable privilege of presenting Stella with his photograph——”

“Oh-h, STELLA!” Winship roared, “Thrust upon you! That's good, too. Stella lost a bet—didn't get a photograph!”



"Bear with me, friends!" Hugh clinked his glass for order, "the patient young man at the end of the table bears on his shoulders the burden of a Winship Tennant, a Blaine Todd and a Stella Chambers rolled into one——"

"Jolly good roll," said Captain Granville, toasting Stella with his glass.

"——Gilchrist Sturtevant," the toastmaster continued in more serious vein, "was born great. For twenty-nine years—at home and abroad—we have watched him achieving more greatness. And to-night—as he sits here with us—the constituency of his native state are about to thrust upon him a place in the National Legislature. Hear me, my friends, I will read you the rumble that announces the landslide—the trickle that precedes the torrent——"

The silence was polite—more polite than interested. Hugh flourished his telegram and read—"Essex County, 9:40 P. M. Returns from the twelve townships of Essex County and three of the ten townships of Marion County give Sturtevant majority of 4,372 over Hodges."

Stella led the applause and forced it good-naturedly when it died too soon. Hugh was beaming at Gilchrist. "Speech, speech!" said Stella, still clapping.

The toastmaster's glass was lifted. "Ladies

and Gentlemen, I toast you—the Honorable Gilchrist Sturtevant!”

Gilchrist's eyes were lowered. He was blushing. This, he felt, was the greatest moment of his life and he had nothing to say! What could he say? He realized what Hugh had forgotten—that these people had no real interest in the feelings crowding his breast at this minute. In all his speeches of the last four months none had been as hard as this one. He wished he could be some other personality, that for a little while life might mean for him what it meant for Stella. He forced his courage and resigned himself to flatness.

“You people know as well as I do,” he said simply, “that if this election is won, as it seems to be, the victory is not a personal one. There were principles too big to be denied. We fought a great war and we are just now beginning to reap the great fruits of that war. For men in all walks of life new worlds of development and expression are opening. And for women. More particularly for women, I will say. In the war and in the recent suffrage legislation women have won a new freedom. I feel that more than ever before the destinies of this country will be shaped by the influence of women. If, in the past, women have made and unmade the careers of men individually,

they will in future make and unmake those careers collectively. I——”

“Rich!” Stella whispered to Captain Granville, “that’s rich! I must tell Deering!” She knew more of the gossip about Gilchrist and Alice than any one present except Hugh.

“——I feel that in the idealism and courage of the newly franchised women of the Seventh District lies much of the credit for to-day’s victory. I don’t think I can say anything else except to thank you for your very generous interest and to hope that in Washington you won’t cast me into the outer darkness that sometimes environs the Congressman!”

He was down and this time it was Hugh who kept a somewhat balky applause on the move. “Might sound well in the newspapers,” Blaine whispered at Myrtis, “rather lame here, though.”

Winship Tennant was on his feet, raising a fork overhead. “Hear, hear!” he said, thickly. “Who won the war! Most felicitous occasion, ladies—another toast to Commander Sturtevant—first in war—first in peace and first in—first in—the Congressional Country Club!”

Two more courses, and conversation was rising, scattering, and rising again. Above it Stella’s unmusical drawl rose oftener and oftener. Stella’s reputation for sparkle and spice had been won more through a complete unrestraint than

through any native brilliance. She was an animal and a very healthy one. Acknowledging no laws, her conversation had the advantage of scope. Between the odd fur she wore about her neck to-night and the upper frontiers of her evening gown glowed prodigal widths of firm white flesh, relieved by a single band over the left shoulder. It was a daring gown. Stella was twenty. She drank her champagne in gulps.

A hotel page handed Hugh another telegram. "Bloody Hollow and all of Butler County returning strong majorities for Hodges." He passed this to Gilchrist without comment. The radical vote! To neither Hugh nor Gilchrist did this return seem important. Of course some counties must be lost. No one else paid any attention. Winship was tinkling two glasses for a hearing——

"As I said—I repeat—most felicitous occasion. Going to call on lady with cat's fur 'round her neck. Toast to Stella—you're a cat, Stella—speaking too much! Stand up, Stella!"

"My eye!" Stella drawled, leaning forward until her shoulders rested on the table. "Who gave you a drink, darling? You're boiled, little boy—shut up or I'll send you home!"

Winship looked pained. Blaine Todd was drinking the toast alone. When he lowered his glass it fell and was shattered. Myrtis shrank



from him dubiously; the others laughed. He felt suddenly called upon to speak. There was a vague thought that in so doing he might prove his sobriety. "Toast to Stella!" he said in a steady voice, "we can't hear anybody else. Let her speak and be done with it. Get up, Chambers!"

"I won't!" said Stella.

Myrtis turned desperately to Hugh. This was a wild party! "I don't think Stella should take champagne," she said.

Hugh laughed. "Thinks she's the Buccaneer," he murmured, "she was hand-picked and hand-raised by Alice. But she isn't up to it. Doesn't *get* the Buccaneer idea!"

Winship's two glasses were tinkling again. He was on his feet. "Who's the toastmaster, anyhow! You are, Hugh. Now Mister Toastmaster—serious defection here—lady with the cat's fur speaking continually—won't get up. Very bad—most felicitous occasion. Appeal to you, Mister Toastmaster—toast to Mister Toastmaster—drinking to you, Hugh!"

Firm applause from Blaine. Chairs were pushed back and the toast drunk.

Delegated again by acclaim, Hugh lauded Stella's modesty and Winship's eloquence. He began to feel out of tune though and his effort lacked spontaneity. He was very conscious of Myrtis. His party had drunk itself out of his reach and

was sweeping by him under more progressive leadership. Winship and Blaine were a committee of two lifting Stella by force from her chair to a standing position.

"In the name of God, don't undress me!" she protested hoarsely as the band over her shoulder slipped.

Myrtis was scared. She turned to Hugh.

But Hugh was oblivious of it all now. He was leaning forward with all his eyes on Gilchrist and a telegram he had just passed him.

"Butter the cat's paw," Winship shouted, tapping at Stella's bare shoulder with a lump of butter.

Hugh didn't hear. Myrtis tugged his sleeve. "I must go—it's late," she said tearfully.

He looked at her as if he had never seen her before in his life. "Go?" he repeated blankly. "All right." He seemed to remember something and reached for his glass, drained it, and rose.

Gilchrist was smiling. Crumpled in his hand was the telegram: "Returns from all but two townships of Seventh District give Hodges majority of three to one over Sturtevant. Chairman Brown of Essex County Democratic Committee concedes election." He toyed with the missive under the table and spoke to Millicent Bronson on his left.

"No, I haven't seen Alice Deering in several months. Too bad she couldn't come over for your party."

Noise of chairs pushed back and the flash of white napkins tossed on the table. Stella's voice again—"Shouldn't drink, Winnie dear—can't hold it!"

Gilchrist was thinking vaguely. Too bad! These people were not his sort—never would be! They were so much more poised and sure than himself—so cleverly indifferent! He felt more than ever embarrassed as he joined in the good-nights. He was glad none of them knew what was in the telegram. Perhaps they never would—he couldn't think of them reading the morning papers!

"Oh, Gik!" Hugh called from the door. "I'm taking Myrtis home. Meet you at the hotel in half an hour!"

"All right, old man. Great party!"

But half an hour later and three hours later Hugh was still pacing the deserted corridors of his hotel while Gilchrist in a taxicab coursed Central Park from end to end and around again. The late candidate for the Seventh District could find nothing intelligible or coherent in his soul except a great loneliness. Over and over he told himself "you have been beaten for Congress——"

and the only reply that came back was "I am alone!"

Paying the taxi driver at the hotel curb later this loneliness flashed suddenly into form. With all his heart he wanted Alice Deering!



## *Chapter Eleven*

SHE hated him! All day she wondered if he felt it, if he were suffering enough in defeat. She fondled her hate with a strange pride; longed to take it to him, let him see it. With the torn fragments of his picture set together on her mantel she faced him fiercely as she dressed for Cecilia's début party.

Perhaps she might meet him there! If he went at all it would be late in the afternoon; she remembered that he could rarely be coaxed from his office before six. She would go late!

Cecilia was an important débutante. All of the social elect were making the pilgrimage, in carriage and motor, silk hat and cutaway, satin and perfume, to the Lee house. There was to be no fanflare; people like the Lees could afford to be simple.

It may have been because she was born there, but the house in which Cecilia lived was very much like Cecilia herself. The exterior was quietly well-bred—white stone, straight lines, with tall windows and a door that was neither

hospitable nor inhospitable. The interior was strictly modern—or seemed so at first sight. Nothing obtruded itself; there was light and air and space. But in the corners, in the unimportant places, were treasures and incongruities to delight those who took the trouble to observe. Remarkable pictures placed without regard for show, delightful trinkets careless of position, rare books in matter-of-fact bookcases, eccentric pieces of furniture belonging to no particular period and not eccentric at all on second thought.

“A fascinating place—without knowing it,” said Arthur Herrick.

This was Cecilia—a treasurehouse of spiritual marvels of which she herself had no knowledge. There were inexplicable things about Cecilia. How, for instance, had she lived twenty years in an atmosphere of guile without a driblet of duplicity! Or how, in an environ of over-fed romance, had she never fancied herself in love! Or how, with a mind hardly used at all and rarely concentrated anywhere, did she manage to be generally right about people and things!

Arthur admired her and was afraid of her. Occasionally he fell in love with her. “It takes time—falling in love with Cess,” he said. “But it’s worth it—you feel important—and as if you were doing a moral thing.”

Although she did not enjoy life Cecilia enjoyed

the prospect of life with all her might. At tea she would think, "soon I'll be dressing for dinner in my new chiffon"; at dinner she thought, "when dinner is over, it will be nice at the theatre." But later, during the play, she would be thinking "I wonder if it will be crowded at Saint Mark's after this!" To Hugh she stood for something almost satisfying but not quite, something to be loved with annoying mental reservations. "Your digestion is bad, Cess," he would complain, "you don't chew your minutes and hours thoroughly." Cecilia would sigh and agree. He would be irritated and go on, "You ought to be alone—this 'community existence' never yet sprouted a soul. Why, why all the excitement—haven't I told you 'the gods approve the——'"

"——'depth and not the tumult of the soul,'" she would finish for him, singsong, and nod wisely without understanding. She attributed much of Hugh's talk to the fact that he had once been a Socialist.

The house was decidedly too small for the numbers who thought the Lees important. Arthur Herrick chafed at the crush; he hated feeling himself a part of anything. He had come with Mrs. Deering; Alice had been unbearably rude since election night and for some reason her mother had been very decent. (Mrs. Deering was in fact quite sentimental about him; hers was not the

nature to draw an age-limit in the rounds of romantic intrigue through which she felt it necessary to move.) He escaped to a corner furthest from the reception "line" only to find himself helplessly *tête-à-tête* with Myrtis Bayne. He despised Myrtis; she was too easily pleased and too eager to please! Presently the little eddies and whirlpools into which people socially bent direct themselves washed Senator Calhoun in their direction and left him high and dry in the same corner. The Senator's presence at social affairs always provoked there eddies and whirlpools in his vicinity—drawn by the singular spectacle of a man of note who could nevertheless be a man of charm in a gallant old fashion. When a truly big man has all the guilelessness and enthusiasm of a child, Society mothers him joyfully as a rare and novel thing. So it was against a veritable current of performing and admiring ladies that the Senator had gracefully given way to the corner where Myrtis, in "sweet-girl" manner, greeted him——

"Oh, Senator Calhoun, you don't remember me. I'm Myrtis Bayne. Father speaks of you so often."

The Senator took her hand automatically—in the long retreat from the receiving line he had held so many.

"Indeed, most pleasantly, Miss Myrtis. It is



an honor to have you remember me. But do I find you cornered with a poet (nodding to Arthur without relinquishing the hand)?—When Lord Byron whispers, you know—has he?”

“Lord Byron,” was innocent; Myrtis inspired no whispers in the poet. Seeing her now, altogether dazzled by the Senator and conversationally lost, he took it on himself to reply:

“I sit at your feet there, Senator. If I whisper it is in modesty alone—the pupil in presence of the master!”

Which was nicely turned, he considered.

Caught between this crossfire of genius Myrtis changed the subject.

“Isn’t it too bad, Senator, that Gilchrist Sturtevant was defeated. Father says it’s a great disappointment for you.”

The Senator looked suddenly as if he had been astonished and outwitted in repartée.

“Why, yes,” he said, “I hope your father is well.”

“How do you explain Sturtevant’s defeat, Senator?” Arthur had the vaguely pleasant feeling of one who pulls marionettes by a string.

The other’s urbanity disappeared. He spoke with fervor——

“Sturtevant was beaten by the most sinister element that has ever raised head in the republic. His candidacy was destroyed by a group whose

design it is to destroy everything. He failed because he was too clean to compromise with forces which have throttled Russia and are seeking to throttle all industrial life in America. He is his country's first casualty in the battle with Bolshevism." Senator Calhoun's face was stern; his tea-party manner was gone now and he was "the little giant" again. "The first skirmish in the battle of Armageddon—the final battle of good and evil—has been lost!"

Arthur wondered what the old chap was driving at. Armageddon! He had always felt himself competent to do mental gymnastics in any environ; this one was perplexing but he was not to be dazzled. He introduced himself with a few intellectual handsprings——

"I agree, Senator—quite! To a man of taste the atmosphere of radicalism must always be unpleasant. The radical is a pioneer perhaps—but by that token he is crude; he has left behind him all the experience and refinements of the ages, and his emotional and intellectual processes are necessarily raw even if strong. An awkward, self-conscious chap—the radical. Art can never go along with pioneers of that type."

Wierd talk at a début tea in Washington! Myrtis thought so, at least, and was uncomfortable. The "little giant," however, seemed little impressed. He did not care for Art.

“Not a question of taste, Mr. Herrick,” he said impatiently, “great principles of right and wrong are at stake.”

For his part Arthur cared as little for Right and Wrong as the other did for Art. Also in another sense, he felt that at this particular moment the Right was on his side. When we speak of the day the statesman may answer if he can; but when we approach the eternal—in human nature or human history—it is to the poet-philosopher we must turn. He ignored the Senator’s impatience, with the same vague consciousness of pulling marionettes——

“For example, Senator, the atrocious trick of labelling things and leaving them. I once talked an entire evening with a Socialist. At the end of it he called me a ‘sentimentalist’ and left. He had settled me with a word—summed me up. Perhaps I *am* a sentimentalist—whatever that means. But I am also a Presbyterian, I prefer art to nature, I am fond of motoring, I like dark-haired women, I eat soft boiled eggs for breakfast—there are lots of things about me. But for that Socialist I was pigeon-holed—Sentimentalist. The world is all new to them and there is so much of it they must make these desperately broad classifications. Although they would never confess it, they believe in heroes and villains. Useful? Most probably—I suppose Progress has

to happen like that—thrusting an uncouth, inexact foot forward. But count me out—it isn't Art!"

He was entranced with his own impromptu analysis but the Senator's attention was wandering.

"By the way, Senator," he added, remembering the marionettes, "surprising to hear you say Sturtevant was beaten by the radical vote. I had heard he was hand in glove with them!"

The Senator stared at him. He seemed more provoked than startled. This young Herrick began to be a jabbering fool!

"A preposterous idea," he said, yielding to an accumulated anger, "and one which no friend of Gilchrist Sturtevant's would credit or repeat. He could not well be associated with the very men responsible for his defeat." He turned abruptly to Mrs. Deering who was approaching with a swarthy South American gentleman. Myrtis had a perplexed impression of an interview ended with sudden and inexplicable heat.

"Essentially illogical," Arthur explained to her and left to look for Alice.

Still the pilgrims flowed down the receiving line. It was late—and Mrs. Lee and her daughter were beginning to let themselves think of slippers and kimonas and a place to sit down—when Hugh Cothran and Gilchrist Sturtevant



arrived. Cecilia thought they looked very straight and tall and earnest in their smooth cut-aways. Hugh's eyes on her were all admiring proprietorship.

"Honestly, Gik, isn't she a nice débutante!"

"Indeed you are, Miss Lee," his friend agreed. "I congratulate you." He hesitated. "I hope all the best things that come to débutantes will come to you."

The late candidate was thinner than when Cecilia had seen him last. And there was something odd about his evident desire to be easy and gay. Oh well, she thought—naturally!

"Thank you *Mister* Sturtevant," she said brightly, "but—don't you think—we're both such old friends of Hugh. Perhaps I might be spared the—Miss!"

"Then—Cecilia you are," he bowed, smiling, "it's rather hard to say. You see you're such an important débutante."

"Important débutante!" Hugh exclaimed, "God forbid! She's only playing. She really is just little old Cess dead tired. Isn't that a good looking cushion chair—just think—you could fall into it—and stretch—and pull your feet up under you—and take your shoes off—and hold my hand! I'd sing something."

"Young men, are you talking nonsense to my daughter?" Mrs. Lee scolded, forcing a weary

smile. The cushion chair nonsense was infinitely alluring, she thought. "For shame—from journalists and statesmen!"

At the last word there was a little pause. Hugh looked self-conscious. "Don't say statesmen, Mrs. Lee. Gik and I are sensitive."

Because she was truly a gentlewoman Cecilia's mother knew when to be frank. She turned to Gilchrist.

"I suppose Hugh means the election. You must know how sincerely we had hoped for your success, Mr. Sturtevant. You are young enough not to be too much discouraged, I'm sure."

He bowed gravely. "Thank you Mrs. Lee—I—perhaps you are right about my youth." As no one else spoke he felt obliged to continue. "Yes—it was rather, er—overwhelming."

Hugh gave his shoulder an exaggerated shrug. "Our head is 'bloody but unbowed,' Mrs. Lee," he asserted.

"Certainly," said Gilchrist as if he had been asked a question.

They passed on to make way for more arrivals. In the next room Mrs. Adyngton-Sims was pouring Senator Calhoun a cup of tea. The Senator looked out-talked; he nodded Hugh an eager invitation to join them but the latter tugged his friend quickly away.

"Watch out—he wants to plant that 'charming lady' on us!"

"Let's go, anyhow," said Gilchrist, "I've had enough."

A few moments later they had recovered their hats and were on the stoop outside. A familiar car was rolling up to the sidewalk. The street was still, strikingly still after the din inside, wrapped in the last glow of a sun that had been long gone.

"Purple twilight!" Hugh exclaimed as if he were swearing.

The vaguely familiar car stopped, discharged its passengers, and rolled away. Up the path from the sidewalk came Ruth Durand and Alice Deering.

Gilchrist saw them first and braced himself nervously. "Hello," said Ruth, self-conscious.

But Alice was not embarrassed; she could not have planned the thing better. Hugh felt her affectionate pat on his shoulder, heard her steady "how do you do, Gilchrist" and stared at her dumbly. She was looking squarely at the villain of a certain piece outside the Purple Iris. In the bold black of her eyes were malice, triumph, mockery—and youth.

Gilchrist smiled. He was facing her nobly now, the gray of his own eyes deep, self-contained, expressive of too much to express anything definable. In the twilight of the street he

looked old, gaunt. Yet something in the figure he made, some forgotten affinity of spirit with her, was robbing Alice of the moment. Commerce with the gray eyes all the malice, all the mockery and triumph, all the youth, seemed to withdraw from the black; now there was no victory, no defeat. Strangely the woman's eyes became as sober, as fathomless, as noble as the man's. Longer than would enemies—or friends—the black and gray communed. Then the black lowered and the gray passed on. Nothing else was said and Alice and Ruth entered the house.



## Part Two: NEW HEAVEN



## Chapter Twelve

THERE are damnable things. Heavenly ones too, even if, as Arthur Herrick liked to put it, a cynic age has scrapped Heaven and Hell. "And wiped out the entire population of those places" he would assert, "so that to-day there are no saints and no sinners—no heroes, no villains; the man who raided German trenches in 1918 may be identic (he liked that word) with the crook who sells fictitious securities to gullible gamblers to-morrow." Arthur of course used the example because he was himself an investor in oil securities and was on the watch for business villainy.

He was a great friend of Sturtevant's now. Indeed he pursued the other with his friendship in a way that would have irritated Hugh but which flattered Gilchrist. His *volte face* had no background of conscience; it was altogether emotional. In the months which followed his successful "conspiracy" to alienate George White from his candidate, his own fortunes had brought him to a place where it was altogether natural that he should warm towards Gilchrist. The jealousy and dislike he had felt for "the great young man"

became sympathy and attraction when he found (or conceived that he had found) the "great young man" no longer great but merely a fellow-victim of a certain ruthless and unscrupulous spirit. The false gayety and belligerent cynicism he thought he detected in Gilchrist now made him long to say "we have been burned in the same fire" but he didn't quite dare—there was something about the other which held that sort of sympathy at arm length. So he marked appropriate passages in a volume of Swinburne and presented it to his new friend. "Swinburne is high-priest of a love that burns and dies" he remarked in faltering explanation. Whereupon Gilchrist had done something he would never have done a few weeks earlier—he had blushed.

Arthur even offered Gilchrist an opportunity to share in his oil venture. When the other evinced a keen interest he was surprised. And vaguely disappointed—the offer had been more in the nature of a compliment than with any idea of its serious acceptance. It wasn't the sort of thing for Gilchrist, of course, and spoiled Arthur's new conception of him. The poet was positive of making the oil thing a go; he wanted to keep Gilchrist as part of that other world of his—that world of romantic defeat and wounded love which should be a dramatic background to business triumphs.

Indeed his new enthusiasm for Gilchrist



brought him no nearer to understanding the latter. He still believed him in league with revolutionists and involved in a *liaison* with the daughter of one of them. But what of that? Every man to his taste! Arthur counted himself a thorough man of the world.

As for Alice, he was still bitterly sentimental about her. He nourished the bitterness until it became a prized possession. It wasn't that she had shut a door in his face. If she had he might have contrived a more dramatic frame for his desolation. But she had been subtle about it, treating him exactly as if the events of the summer and fall had never occurred. Without words, without even the enactment of a dumb "scene," she had let him understand that the sentimental and demonstrative were dismissed from their relationship. He saw her rarely now; he accepted her fiat because it was his nature to accept whatever was affirmative in his horizon. Strong men—like Gilchrist Sturtevant—create their environments, or go down in the attempt; able, philosophic men like Hugh Cothran exploit their environments, or ignore them. Arthur could neither create nor exploit; he could only reflect. He was creature of every circumstance or experience Chance flung his way. Without will to shake from life what he wanted of it or faculty to build something excellent out of what life brought

him, he was merely photographic of every fortune he might happen through.

Late in January a spectacular snowstorm arrived to mantle the long streets with white magic and people the air with dim-flying flakes. Brooding luxuriously over Alice, smoking many cigarettes, and coaxing himself into a blissful self-pity, Arthur watched the storm from his window and conceived how heroic a figure he might make in the maelstrom outside. It was an alluring rôle; late in the afternoon he donned a battered hat and trench coat and set forth to act the part. Plowing through the white gale around the Mall he flung his soul tragic tidbits of other sentimentalists in other days. "Nature red in tooth and claw" he muttered over clenched teeth as the hurtling flakes whipped his face——

"Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods there be  
For my unconquerable soul!"

He rather wished he might meet Alice—that she might see him bravely 'carrying on.' He remembered a certain curl behind her ear and shook his head in histrionic anger——

"Am I mad that I should cherish  
That which bears but bitter fruit!  
I will pluck it from my bosom  
Though my heart be at the root!"

Ah, but the desolation of it! (He sighed deeply and the wet freshness of the air was tonic to his delight; he was having the time of his life.) "The light of a whole life dies when love is done." Yet how impossible she was, anyhow! He hated her for the subordinate post she had dared assign him. How little she could appreciate or understand a man of sensibilities! How blunt and raw and unwomanly was her very strength! He had been deceived in her. Or had she changed in these recent weeks? Certainly the riotous, animal Alice he had loved last summer, lusting for life and daring all to have it, was worlds away from the firm, unemotional, maddeningly pleasant young woman who had lately smothered him out of her life. There was something smooth and sour about her now.

A stiff quip of wind threatened his hat; he clutched it firmly. Courage! In some dim recess of the future a real woman waited for him! The One Woman! Beside Her Alice was a hoyden, a female martinet masquerading as Frivolity in a freakish dress of Folly! He remembered his whimsical rhyme to her after the Deering dinner——

"Alice, when the wine is red  
You stir my heart and turn my head;  
Every sober scruple flies,  
Intoxicate to torrid eyes,



And you (who know how well you may)  
Frivol all my peace away.  
To-night 'twas Wisdom made me go—  
But Folly sings '*a bientôt!*' "

Decadent verse! Decadent womanhood to inspire it! He puffed her away with a breath that was steam in the frosty air—then drew her back again wet and fresh. After all, there was much he could never forget. That other verse later, on when his passion had gone deep——

"Alice Deering, in your eyes  
Life a-riot happy lies;  
In-washed shell on sea-blown dune,  
Clashing cymbal, loud bassoon,  
Etch a mortal Paradise!

Read the stars—a whisper clear  
Echoes in her jeweled ear,  
Quarrels with her happy skies,  
Upward quickens, thrills, and cries,  
'Alice, Love is coming near!'

Those days are gone—that dream is done!  
Courage! How the gale blows! How it tightens  
the muscles of the face and sets the jaw stern and  
bold! Across the Potomac now was the soft hint  
of sunset, pink through cloud banks and drifting  
snow, warm along the river's lip. That Other—  
the Real Woman in whom he must believe!  
Faintly he conceived Her—pale, laughing lips—  
eyes he could not see!

The gale was dying; now the snowfall had



become intermittent and thin. At the Lincoln Memorial he turned back. In a little while, with the setting sun, the wind and snow had ceased. Peace and twilight about him as he walked, and crunching of snow underfoot. Approaching the Mall he passed the Munitions Building and felt the thrill that always came to him when the Washington Monument towered into sight. He mused on it. He had planned a verse about the Monument someday—there was something supreme about it—appealed to the mystic—in another age there might have been a sect of Monument Worshipers! The Shaft in the Sky!

In front of him he heard a low, musical exclamation. A young woman whom he was about to overtake had slipped and fallen sidewise into the snow. With a startled “Oh, too bad—hope you aren’t hurt” he stepped forward quickly and helped her to her feet. She brushed the snow from her shoulder and laughed acknowledgment of his aid—“No, not a bit, thank you.”

He hesitated, and forgot to pick up a book she had been carrying. Silence and twilight—and this quiet, melodious voice. Something seemed to make the whole situation unusual. He had a strange sense of being in the midst of one of life’s “moments.” But the girl said nothing more and he could only lift his hat and walk on ahead.

Then it was as if he had not seen her at all

until his back was turned. He began to recall a number of things about her and to swallow hard. What color! Dignity! Her voice and eyes! This was no ordinary girl! Too simply dressed to be a government worker! Something indefinable—a sort of radiance—or what was it? He continued walking forward but all his consciousness was on the one behind him. Who was she? It had all been so simple, quick! Poetry in it! After the storm—in the twilight! Could it be—nonsense—the One Woman—who waited for him!

He had only to think it to believe it. And every step taking him away! He gritted his teeth and felt stronger. A mere convention to keep them apart! He would stop and wait for her to come up! More than that—he would turn back! She was coming, a hundred yards in rear. He began walking towards her and presently saw her recognize him, sensed the mild inquiry in her eyes, and hastened to speak while his courage held——

“Excuse me—I—I don’t want to be annoying,” he began lamely. Then he regained his belief in the Importance of this thing—“but—I seem to know you’ll understand—I—you’re sure you aren’t hurt?”

She had stopped, surprised but polite. “Why, no—I’m perfectly all right,” she said.

His adventure once launched, Arthur felt him-

self exalted. He tried to speak quietly but his voice broke a little,

“Do you believe there is one woman for every ——” he began, and then, conscious once more of creating an extraordinary impression, stammered, “I—I know I must sound absurd—but its only that I want to know you and—and——” He could think of nothing else to say.

Her lips were parted in perplexity. “But why should you want to know me? You speak as though you’d seen me before?”

“I have—I have,” he said fervently, “look—you’ve got to believe in me, I’m—here’s my card—I’m a decent sort—you can find out about me. I want you to let me—to tell me your name—let me see you again. You don’t know how—how much it means!”

A faint solicitude came into her manner. She was quite self-possessed. The poet had thrust the card into her hand and was standing humbly in her path, imploring with his eyes.

“I think you’ve mistaken me for someone else,” she said very gently, examining the card, “I’m sorry—you—you must let me pass now.”

At the suggestion that he was blocking her way Arthur’s conception of the “moment” underwent a lightning change. He was making unpleasant advances on the street! He was being a cheap flirt—insulting a decent girl! Here was some-

thing ugly! All the artist in him was mortified. With lowered eyes he stepped awkwardly out into the deeper snow crowding the path. The girl passed falteringly by and disappeared into the twilight.



## Chapter Thirteen

SENATOR CALHOUN'S secretary was making careful replies to the newspapermen in his office.

"No, not until ten. He instructed me to say that the bill is to be known as the Sturtevant Plan for Adjudication of Industrial Disputes. The Senator wishes it understood that the idea is Mr. Sturtevant's."

"And where is Sturtevant, Miss McLanahan?" asked Floyd of the *Courier*. He was the business-like type of journalist to whom a bright eye and a charming manner were all in the day's work; the girl was not a girl at all—merely a Senator's secretary. Because of this the particular girl liked him.

"He has an appointment here at eleven."

"Good, we'll get him then. I'd like to feature this next Sunday."

The fourth estate retired.

Anne McLanahan set about opening the mail. In spite of Floyd's matter-of-fact assumption, she was not "merely a Senator's secretary." There was something special about Anne. She

looked her part here no better than she had at Bloody Hollow on the night of Gilchrist's visit. Personality has no particular place and will outstand any place. Most women are of one type or another but Senator Calhoun's secretary could not be classified. She was herself. Call her a very pretty girl—the label is conventional and confining; point the peculiar clearness of an olive skin through which she can blush pink; say her features are as firm as they are round and that her nose is a trifle prominent as Washington noses go; speak of the delicate and spiritual vitality her movements suggest; grow perfervid and call her a radiant soul—these are only adjectives attached to a noun—the noun, the personality, can carry the adjectives without betraying its own essence!

“Good-morrow, Miss Anne!” said Hugh Cothran from the doorway a moment later, “may I come in—I *have* come in!”

“Yes—but the Senator isn't here yet.” She had no understanding of flippancies but was tolerant of them.

“Party last night? You must watch this giddy Senator of yours—he's awfully normal, you know.”

“You don't think——” she caught herself taking Hugh seriously, and began again, “The re-

porters were in to ask about his new bill. It's to be called the 'Sturtevant Plan.' "

"Good!" said Hugh, looking thoughtful, "Good!" he repeated, "it was about Gik I wanted to talk to him. Er—we'll talk, you and I—shall we!"

"Surely." She sat up in her chair, pleased and curious.

Hugh was embarrassed now at his own atmosphere of confidence. "You know—there are all sorts of ways of going to the dogs."

"No! I mean—are there?"

"Some people go on purpose—all at once. I do it like that myself—its fun."

"Yes," she agreed, not in the least understanding what he was driving at. She liked Hugh as much as she little comprehended him.

"Well, Gik's the other kind. Does it gradually and doesn't know about it."

"Does what?"

"Goes to the bow-wows."

"But—why should he?"

"Oh, I don't know. He believes in too many things. Shaw says a cynic is a disillusioned idealist. It doesn't matter."

"A cynic doesn't believe things any more but once did?" Anne examined the idea.

"Well, I'm a bit of one myself," Hugh boasted, "but he's losing his confidence. Its hard to say

just how he has changed. He's cheerful—yes—that's the thing—he's too damned cheerful—oh, excuse me, Miss Anne!"

"Its father's favorite word." She was deciding that Hugh was the most attractive man she had ever met. "Mr. Sturtevant was disappointed about the election?"

"Yes—I suppose he was. But——"

"What does he do now?"

"Law—supposedly. As a matter of fact he's spending his money in a fool oil stunt with Arthur Herrick."

"Herrick?" she asked quickly.

"Yes—why?"

Senator Calhoun was in the doorway in a derby hat which he doffed gallantly to Anne, and then brandished at Hugh——

"Aha—Hugh, you're caught, sir. I should have warned my colleague." He turned to Anne again, "Good-morning, Senator?"

"Good-morning, Senator Calhoun." She was blushing. She could never understand why he called her "Senator" too.

"How do you like my new hat?" He put it on and waited her comment with confidence.

Anne looked at the hat and then looked appealingly at Hugh who was shaking his head. When she spoke, tragedy was in her voice——



"Oh, I'm so sorry," she faltered, "I'm afraid I don't like it."

"A bit singular, Senator," Hugh agreed, "hardly your style. Too nattyish for a man of your—er—dignity."

The Senator was grieved. He mused on himself in the mirror, trying the hat at several angles, pleased with each one. Then he put it on his desk and looked at it bitterly.

"You and Hugh are queer folks, Senator," he said, "I've been universally admired in this hat."

He was childishly exasperated, but he untied the box in which he had brought away his old felt, took it out and put the derby in its place.

Hugh followed him into the inner office and talked about Gilchrist. Both of them loved Gilchrist but it was hard for either of them to understand him, particularly at this time. For them the motive power of life came from outside; in their reactions to people and things they had all the stimulus their natures required.

"I lost my first campaign," said the Senator, "its the hardest one of all to lose."

"Oh politics," Hugh scoffed, "he doesn't mind that so much. There's a girl, you know. Alice Deering."

"Charming creature! But Gilchrist isn't a lover. I can only think that is an incident."

Hugh nodded, lit a cigarette, threw it away, and tapped at the desk with a pencil.

"Maybe we're both wrong. I don't believe he gives a little damn about Alice or the election either. It's what they represent. He had ideals about them and they've gone to smash. He can't believe in himself any more—that's it—and he's trying to let other people run him which is just what can't be done in his case. Gik's a self-starter, Senator—he can't be cranked even if he wants to."

From the other's expression it was not apparent whether he agreed or disagreed, or even whether he had heard. "I've suggested to the President that he be named for the vacancy on the Industrial Relations Commission. Of course he's young and there will be objections, but I believe his study and experience qualify him. No job is too big for the man who can hold it."

"No," said Hugh absently and it was as little apparent whether *he* agreed or disagreed or had heard. There was an undoubted lack of "contact" in the conversation as each of the two participants amiably pursued his own line of thought. "Alice wants me for lunch at her house to-day," the younger man continued, "I wonder—oh, well, we can't let him give up, Senator—best fellow in the world, you know."

After Hugh had gone Senator Calhoun spent

an hour outlining a speech on the Peace of Versailles. He ended by destroying his notes and dismissing the whole subject with an impromptu and somewhat profane peroration against Henry Cabot Lodge. Anne could hear him walking up and down and chanting at top pitch. This was a usual process; his best speeches came from the heart and could not be outlined.

Gilchrist was late. Anne had her hat on and was leaving for lunch when he came into the outer office. Neither of them knew how unpleasantly their two names had been linked in certain quarters. He was very gay and greeted her with a merry little twitch of the chin and lower lip which she recognized as familiar but not to him. Hugh did that! Now that she noticed it, his whole manner seemed oddly like Hugh's. It gave her an unpleasant impression. What was charming in Hugh was strangely weak in Gilchrist.

"How's my good friend, Guibert, Miss McLanahan?" he asked.

"He isn't well," said Anne, "he—was in the hospital."

"Hospital! Again?"

"Yes. You see father—why, father struck him. I had a letter from Pierre. He says he called father a Christian Socialist and that father was very angry——"

Gilchrist was grinning. "Poor old Pierre. Isn't your dad a trifle *doctrinaire*?"

Anne looked blank. "They are friends again now. They're coming here next month to a national meeting or something."

"National—or anti-national?" he smiled.

She was blank again. "Oh, do you mean—radical?" With the trends of industrial thought she was, it would seem, only dimly familiar.

"Your father has the courage of his convictions," he said crisply and *apropos* of nothing she could discover. She changed the subject——

"You're practicing law, aren't you—now?"

"Now and then, yes. But I'm in business too. Arthur Herrick and I are about to become sordidly rich—don't tell your dad!"

"It's—is it Mr. Arthur Herrick?"

"Yes, do you know him?"

"I—no, I don't know him. I'm off to lunch, Mr. Sturtevant. The Senator is inside."

It was like him not to have noticed her interest at mention of Arthur.

Senator Calhoun was deep in a printed page. Seeing Gilchrist, he closed the book hastily and looked as sheepish as any schoolboy. Gilchrist spied the caption and smiled. It was not the Esch-Cummins Railroad Bill the Senator read nor the Plumb Plan for Industrial Reorganization, nor indeed any of the myriad pamphlets



with which members of the Upper Branch keep themselves informed. It was Dumas' "Three Musketeers" and was quite thumbworn.

"Oh, come in, Gilchrist, my dear boy," said the "little giant" self-consciously, "happened to stumble on a classic—never grows old—read it a dozen times. Delighted to see you, old fellow!"

The younger man accepted a cigar and took his part comfortably in the pleasantries with which Senator Calhoun always preferred to approach any more serious topic. From the chair in which he sat he could see through a window the Washington Monument glinting with noonday sun.

"And what do I hear? You're venturing in oil with young Herrick?" the Senator asked finally in a voice which sounded as if he were feeling his way on tiptoe.

"Just what I came to talk about. You're surprised, aren't you?"

"Yes." It was perhaps the briefest reply the Senator had ever made.

"You call it speculating, I suppose. Well—perhaps so. It is undoubtedly out of line with my, er, past activities. But, Senator, I've got to have money—and a lot of it. Er—none of the things I want to do are possible without a measure of economic independence, you know. It's simple enough. Grandfather left me ten thousand dollars—I'm going to put it into something that will

either make or break me. It's only the men who take the big chances who make the big money. After all, ten thousand is comparatively so little it wouldn't ruin me to lose it—and there'll be many times that if I win——”

The ash from his cigar fell on the carpet. To the elder man he sounded like a little boy begging for a tin whistle. It was shocking!

“——Arthur Herrick has been awfully decent about it. He and I are organizing a company here and Talbot, the man who owns the land in Kansas, is to run things out there. He's an experienced oil man—I hear you know him?”

Senator Calhoun looked worried and excited. “Oh, Talbot's honest enough,” he said, “made a good deal on his speculations, I understand.” He swayed nervously to and fro in his swivel chair, shocked beyond measure at the change in Sturtevant, at the apology in his manner, the vague recklessness and irresponsibility back of his easy, plausible words. Of course, Hugh speculated too, he recalled, but that was different; with Hugh it was an adventure and something he expected to pay for, a substitute for the activity and excitement his imagination required. Hugh would never take this mad “make or break” attitude. In Gilchrist the whole thing suggested a sort of moral collapse, a surrender to exterior forces over which he no longer sought control.

"It's rather incongruous," he said, trying to sound matter-of-fact, and avoiding Gilchrist's eye, "I find it hard to associate you with a gamble. And it is a gamble—you say so yourself. A dubious business for a strong man. You—you've always made your own way, Gilchrist—haven't waited for Chance to do it. I—there's something spineless about it to me. Frankly, I can't understand. It's—it's degrading!"

His protest had become stronger than he intended. "Forgive me, my boy—I'm older than you," he apologized. His voice was thin with eagerness now for he loved this young man. "I have other plans for you—if you'll give up this venture. Yesterday I suggested to Tumulty that the President name you for the vacancy on the Industrial Relations Commission—a post for which your experience and abilities fit you splendidly. There'll be a fight—you're young and White seems to oppose it for some reason I haven't made out. But Tumulty thinks that the President will look favorably on the proposal. In addition I can say that pressure will be brought to bear from—er, other quarters."

The Senator was walking up and down; Gilchrist came over to put an affectionate arm around him. He towered six inches above the "little giant."

"You and Hugh are the best friends a man

ever had," he said. "But—I couldn't accept. I'm tired of all that. It wasn't the election—I'm just tired. There's such a mess everywhere——"

"All the more reason——"

"——I haven't any solution. I'm not the man to hold office because I can't even work things out for myself. I've got to think. The world's not better since the war—its worse."

His face was gray. The hesitancy left his manner as he began to throw himself at thoughts long avoided.

"Look at them overseas—France, Britain, Italy, Japan—squabbling for territory, maneuvering for square miles, playing the old game of rotten diplomacy while the League that was to keep the world in enlightened alliance sits like a girls' sewing circle at Geneva! Look at Russia—God only knows what's going on there or what's coming out of it some day! And worse than all the rest—the United States of America! What a spectacle to inspire Europe! We came in time to win the war—sent our President to end war for all time—led the world——"

Anne came in but he did not notice her. He was standing with his back to the great mantelpiece at the end of the room, standing straight with head lifted and jaw tight, all the fever and drama of disillusion in his face.

"——and then—in the final battle—with vic-



tory in sight—we lift an impassible barricade and call it Americanism. One hundred per cent Americanism! God save the percentage! The world may go back to its old shackles—may starve or explode—we are Americans! Not an atom of our sovereignty may be risked for the civilization of which we boast ourselves a dominant part! I believe in patriotism, Senator; there are times when patriotism is big—but in this crisis it is the littlest, most damnable thing in the world! And the most dangerous. We have forgotten what the war was about—in a year we have swung from the exaltation of sacrifice to the infamy of selfishness. An unenlightened selfishness, too—stupid—suicidal—smearing our whole national existence with class and race hatred, intolerance, persecution, greediness—corrupting our manhood with an animal materialism that finds no higher summons in life than to eat and lust and die. And our women—no civilization is better than its women—ours aren't women, they're ugly children snatching at sensations, playing with sex, making dolls of the holinesses of life, terrified at whatever is fundamental or fine, scornful of all that's modest or reverent or sweet, taking everything, giving nothing——”

A low exclamation from Anne halted him. He turned to her with startled eyes as if he had been

shaken from sleep. "It's beyond me," he said, shamefacedly, his enthusiasm suddenly gone.

No one spoke. Anne was looking at Senator Calhoun, demanding something of him without knowing what. He stared at the window, at the Monument far beyond it, and when he finally spoke it was as though he repeated something to which he was listening——

"It's beyond me—too. I only know that I must believe—that I can never look from this window at that shaft to the Father of his Country without replenished faith in the Destiny that drove him. I must still believe in America and America's mission. We have come to Armageddon; the final battle of good and evil is begun. It is in America it must be fought—here God has marshalled the two forces and is loosing them to ultimate conflict. You—you are with us—you are on the Lord's side. You will pass this brief Gethsemane and hear again that something within you forever crying 'hope'—and that sterner something that cries 'fight.' The Gilchrist Sturtevant who was foremost in faith and courage and combat won't fail us now because these days are dark." He approached the younger man almost shyly and placed a hand on his arm. "I want you to say you'll accept this appointment, Gilchrist."

Gilchrist's face was heavy. "I'm sorry, Sena-

tor, awfully sorry—but I can't do it." He shook the other's hand and looked about blindly for his hat. "Gad! I envy you your Armageddon!" he said.

After he had gone the Senator sat a long time, drumming the arm of his chair and staring out of the window. Across the desk Anne was looking like anything but a private secretary.

"He left his gloves," she said, pointing at a pair on the desk.

The other's eyes were on the distant shaft.

"Well, we'll get him appointed anyhow—eh, Senator!" he queried.

His private secretary came over quite suddenly and kissed him.

"Yes, Senator," she said.

## Chapter Fourteen

**H**UGH waited in the Deering library and wondered why he had never fallen in love with Alice Deering. The fire threw heroic lights on an old portrait of her paternal grandmother in girlhood. He had always liked that portrait; it was so like and unlike Alice. The stately Victorian carriage and reserve were as unlike her as the softly resolute chin, the humorous restless mouth and incongruously classic brow, were like her. A Nineteenth Century aristocrat—Alice's grandmother, he thought! Type of a day when women won by what they held in reserve—when it was not fashionable to carry one's legs, shoulders and immortal souls abroad without decent clothing! They had a value then—women's legs and souls! Sort of things that grow best under cover!

The Buccaneer's grandmother! He would have loved *her*! His fancy gave her great qualities of mind and heart. "A creature breathing thoughtful breath, a traveller between life and death!" She reminded him vaguely of several people—of Alice, of his own mother, of Anne Mc-



Lanahan! Dreaming over the portrait, his mild antagonism to Twentieth Century womanhood lost some of its good humor and became irritable; into the blood of the philosopher there crept for a moment the fever of a propagandist. Realism! Frankness! Stella Chambers stuff! No more realism in modern ugliness than in Victorian prettiness, he swore! The truth is somewhere between—they've leaned so far out of heaven for it they're nearer hell than earth! Ugliness for ugliness' sake! He remembered Arthur saying that! Damned decadent, Arthur—but right 'idea sometimes!

Upstairs were murmurs of masculine conversation. Occasionally John Hampton's voice was audible. Hugh caught an impatient "impossible!" from him and smiled. Robert Deering was "consulting" his lawyer!

Through the library window he saw a car roll up to the Deering curb. In a few moments the maid ushered Captain Granville into the room. Hugh was sorry; he hated "at homes."

"Lot of snow this winter—for Washington," he volunteered. Englishmen embarrassed him.

"Yes," said Granville, "its jolly outside. We're driving."

*We!* What the devil! Had Alice forgotten?

But at this moment, Mrs. Deering came in, hatted and gloved. "'Lo, Hugh," she said, hand-

ing Granville her cloak, "don't ask me where Alice is—I never know. The infant's too disagreeable for words. She hasn't her mother's temperament, has she Granny, dear?"

"No, but she has her mother's complexion," said Granville gallantly, helping with the cloak.

"Good-bye," said Hugh, grinning now that he knew whose caller the captain was.

When they had gone he took a deep chair and apostrophized the portrait. "O tempora! O mores! O hell! You mustn't mind your daughter-in-law, madam!"

A hand on his shoulder pressed him back as he tried to get up. "Stay there, *mon enfant*," said Alice. "Worshipping again? Isn't there trouble enough with the living that you must make me jealous of a departed grandmother?"

"You're late," he reproached. She was fresh from out of doors and kept her red-lined coat on. Her presence filled the room, vital as snow. She did not trouble to smile.

"Stella kept me. She wants to quit."

"Quit what?"

"The courses at George Washington."

"Will you?"

"Stella will—yes."

"But you'll stick. Good! I thought so. Take your coat off?"

"Oh no—we're off!"

"Who?"

"You and I, stupid—for a walk. I can't sit here with grandmother. She cramps my style."

He settled in his chair, groaning, "Oh, but the fire—I say, Buccaneer, I—its—I haven't my rubbers—its cheerful here!"

She was determined and would not hear no. "The snow is glorious, Hugh. I'll recite you Arthur's latest called 'My Lady of Snow.' He sent it to me but I'm not the lady. The nose, mouth, complexion are all wrong. She has 'pale, laughing lips'—disgusting, isn't it?"

"*He* is, yes," Hugh grumbled, getting into his coat.

"Nice boy!" He presumed she meant Arthur, but she didn't.

From upstairs John Hampton's voice came to them in sudden emphasis—"all right, put Western Leasing's last issue on the New York list if you want to give something away; but in the name of sanity don't insist on this Mars business."

"Mars?" Hugh whispered blankly.

Alice's smile was an odd compound of tenderness and defiance. "Dad has a plan," she said, "its absurd—but he's big—big!"

Outside they made for Massachusetts Avenue and then the park. At Sheridan Circle, George White's machine swept by them with Mr. White

and Senator Calhoun gesticulating at each other in the tonneau. Up Massachusetts Hill intervals of open country, nestled in white, reminded Hugh of Princeton vistas and undergraduate tramps. He loved it. She was long-legged and walked him stride for stride. When they reached the park they left the path to plow across country through clinging wetness and piney underbrush, heavy with snow. When the creek interfered they threaded along the bank until there was a place to cross, stepping from rock to rock. She stopped once on a boulder in midstream and they stood watching the shivering, frivolous little ripples of water against the stone.

"I adore this!" she said as if it were a surprising thing. He felt the strangeness of her and marvelled. Then he succumbed to it and felt strange himself, felt as if there were three people present instead of two—three people saying countless things to one another without speaking. There was a positive impulsion against speech. He did not think of Alice as altered in any fashion; he felt she had always been like this and that no one had known, not even herself.

Shuffling along a bridle path they kicked at hoof prints in the snow. A furry, brown creature flashed across in front of them and burrowed into a pile of dead brush. Hugh poked for it with a stick, calling it names. He wondered at his own



voice; it sounded queer. He was lost in a world of white. He must talk more!

“Gik’s place in the Adirondaks is like this——” he began, and halted, remembering for the first time what she had told him at Saint Mark’s months ago.

“Yes,” she said, “what about Gilchrist?” She cleared her throat.

So he chose Gilchrist as a topic. He talked of his friend to his friend’s enemy—without knowing how much of an enemy she had been or how little one she was to-day. He told her his own theory about the other’s unnatural absorption in dinners and dances, about his lack of interest in Senator Calhoun’s political efforts for him, about the speculation in oil with Arthur. He even took Alice to France, comparing the Gilchrist of those days with the one of this.

He did not see how white her face went nor the passionate, drawn, set of her lips nor the fierce tenderness in her eyes. She walked a little behind him and felt as bitter and wronged as though in some manner she were being denied a thing rightfully and supremely desired.

She had gone a long way since summer. The very energies with which she had set about the vindication of her hurt pride had brought her close to a thing she had never seen before—her

own soul. The proximity was harsh for a time because she did not desire it. She had no remorse for the things she had done, but grief she did have, a grief that did not deaden but demanded. The soul she had found summoned her to she knew not what. She had seen a beaten man and found in his eyes—herself. There was no thought of who had beaten him.

“It’s almost dark,” she said, “we’d best turn back.”

She led the way until they came to the Connecticut Avenue bridge. Both of them had lapsed again into the same enthralled silence. Hugh had never known her like this; he felt half in love with her and altogether in love with the occasion. Below them as they crossed the bridge were the now sombre valleys of the park; in front, the towering Dresden and the myriad lights of Washington. Over both of them crept a sort of exultant buoyancy. They linked arms, she hummed a song and he whistled low accompaniment in step. At the Nineteenth Street hill boys were sledding in the twilight. Later there would be fashion folk with sleds there, for snow is an event in the capital.

“I’ll take you sledding,” he volunteered, feeling like a little boy himself.

“All right. Thursday night—if it lasts.”

"Not Thursday—I——"

"Oh! Who is she? You've fallen for a deb already?"

"It's Anne McLanahan. To the movies."

"Strange pastures," she said carelessly, "the coal miner's daughter?"

"Why not? I like her." He was offended.

"Only my jealousy, darling," she murmured, hugging his arm. "You have a fancy about every one—what is it about her?"

He thought. "She—well, she's so refreshingly real. It's because she hasn't any dramatic sense—or any literary instinct. Or excess imagination. She can't be anything but herself."

"Meaning——?"

"You know. Literary people are always living up to something they've read or written. And the dramatic ones are too busy acting parts they conceive for themselves."

"And the ones with imagination——?"

"They're always in the grip of it—some fancy or other—never the same twice."

"Go in peace! You reek with imagination yourself!"

They had reached the block where she lived.

"It's been a glorious walk," she said, exultantly. "Come on! Fast!" She seized his hand and ran like mad, pulling him along. "Faster—faster, boy!"

At the Deering doorway, breathing excitedly, her eyes bright and hard, she took his face between her hands, hugged his cheeks, and was gone.



## *Chapter Fifteen*

**N**ORTH Nine Nine nine.”

Hugh sat on the edge of the bed in his room at the club and waited while the club operator repeated the number. An elderly gentleman in the next room whom rheumatism had made irritable and statistical took pains to keep a record of the number of times Hugh called “North 999” in a month. If the young “clubman” had known how much of his club life was under surveillance he might have been embarrassed. Not knowing it, however, he was sociable with his telephone and depended on it. Of course, he did not take the instrument as seriously as did Senator Calhoun, who would doff his hat or put on his coat if talking to a lady. In fact Hugh conducted some of his most formal and gallant conversations in a state of extreme negligence.

It was true that most of his conversations were with North 999. To sit in his room and, with the performance of a simple mechanical act, have Cecilia’s voice and Cecilia’s ear was one of life’s most notable conveniences. Especially in the morning; the voice was very lively then and the

ear comparatively attentive. There was an ear-ring on the ear—he always remembered it when he talked. Indeed he never had Cecilia on the telephone without having in mind how her hair was probably done and what her expression (or lack of it) might be at each particular conversational development. And whether her eyes were wide open or nearly shut! He was about to decide that he was in love with Cecilia. At the same time he was about to conclude that after all there was nothing very exciting about love and that it required lots of effort.

“North nine nine nine? Oh, hello, Mrs. Lee—may I talk to Cecilia?”

“Not up yet, Hugh,” said Mrs. Lee who liked him and felt helpless with him and hoped Cecilia would not fall in love with him, “it was four o’clock when she came in this morning. But she has a luncheon at one-thirty—I’ll wake her in half an hour.”

He was obstinate. “Now, Mrs. Lee, really—every self-respecting girl should be up by twelve, shouldn’t she? I’ve something important, honestly—won’t you call her?”

“Fakir!” she laughed, “it’s only nonsense you’ll talk. I—well, wait a moment and I’ll see.”

He whistled into the phone until a pitiful voice volunteered a weak “hel-lo” and then repeated brightly “Oh hello, Hugh Cothran.”

"Don't speak to me," he scolded, "*I* was up with the sun."

"So was I, Hugh—just before I went to bed. There were milk wagons too."

"Either you're Rip Van Winkle or you're a flapper! Jove, you never see *me* except at parties—must be starved, Cess!"

"Yes—oh no—I haven't had breakfast." He wondered if she were facetious or only sleepy.

"Eat nothing until you see me—I'll come up for lunch in person."

"What *are* you talking about—it sounds cannibal! Well, you can't come because I'm lunching at the Shoreham. Ruth Durand's here from college."

"To-morrow night, then?"

"To-morrow night? I'm going to a theatre party. The next night, you—but I forgot—Colonel Dorsey's dinner to Laura Hotchkiss is then. And after that—why, Hugh, I haven't an evening free for ever so long. What did you want me to do?"

He was irritated. "Must we always *do* something? I wanted you to stay at home and hear me talk. Entertain you single-handed."

"Oh!" Really Hugh shouldn't expect a débutante to give a whole evening to one person without a theater or supper or even a moving picture to help! "Well, you'd better come sledding

with Blaine Todd and me to-night. It's wonderful on the Nineteenth Street hill. Everybody's coming!"

It annoyed him that "everybody's coming" attracted her and that she should offer it as an inducement to him. He hated what he called the "community existence."

"Can't," he said, "I'm going out with a school marm."

"School marm? Hugh—who is this woman?"

"A coal miner's daughter. Working girl. Don't worry—heaven protects them!"

"You mean—demitasses! Oh, I know—its Senator Calhoun's new secretary, isn't it? Now, that's *quite* exciting. I know, Hugh—bring her along sledding—I like funny people!"

"But she isn't funny."

"Silly, you know what I mean. Will you? I'll come for you in the electric—there'll be lots of sleds. I want to see her. Bet my hat you're falling for her."

He was mollified. After all Cess was rather an angel!

"Well, I'll ask her," he agreed. "Is Alice coming?"

"No—o! Isn't she queer? Hasn't been to a single party since my *début*. Wonder if she's engaged or something? Not to Arthur, I know—he told me all about it. But, Hugh, what *has* hap-



pened to Gilchrist Sturtevant? He's so *gay*. I see him at all the dances and he acts flippant and funny, sort of. It doesn't suit him a bit. Dances with me a lot and talks exactly like you. Only it seems foolish from him—and *you* are never foolish, are you?"

"Oh no!"

"Oh—no?"

"——What number did you call, please?" broke in a voice that was not Cecilia's.

Hugh was quickly embarrassed. "Why—er—I——"

"He has his number, central—if you'll stay off the wire, please," said Cecilia sharply, "—I hear he's gambling and sort of dissipating—lots of the debs are excited about him—there's something so distinguished and sort of tragic—he's very graceful, too. I like tall men."

Hugh's voice was indistinct as if he were some distance from the telephone——

"That fool Arthur•Herrick roped him into an oil deal and the whole thing's about to go smash——" the voice came nearer—"well, be a good little deb, Cess—run along and eat your curds and whey—be sure to say 'prunes and prisms'—it'll make your mouth pretty. I'll let you know whether we can come to-night."

"Good-bye," she said, hurt at something in his tone.

Hugh spent three hours at his typewriter clicking off an article on the "Inhumanity of Politics to its High Priests." He spent another hour thinking of a letter received that morning offering him the editorship of a small Montana newspaper. Once he stopped to telephone Anne McLanahan at Senator Calhoun's office and tell her about the sledding party. It was arranged that she should have dinner with him down town instead of going out to the little boarding house where she lived.

Dinner with Anne was an awkward affair at first. After the large casualness of Senator Calhoun's office the intimacy of a quiet table in a tea-shop rather appalled him. Anne looked eager but tired. This was a great occasion for her. Never had she dined out with anyone like this, with music and flowers and a marvellously polite waitress who called Mr. Cothran by name and thought of everything. Conversation lagged, however; she had no notion of the obligation to constant dialogue which all but the most ultra stratas of society impose. She had been accustomed to talking only when she wanted to and to-night, because she was tired and there was so much to see and feel, she talked hardly at all. Hugh's embarrassment made him formal; the lapses of conversation seemed to him at times dull and again more intimate than he felt was appropriate. He tried hard

but Anne sat like some great-eyed goddess over whom the waves of mortal speech passed without impress. For a little while he tried harder, then he became amused and stopped with a pleasant sense of being no longer accountable. He had no sooner become enamoured of the easy silence, however, than the goddess deigned speech. What did Hugh do all day? Who was the middle-aged gentleman to whom he had just spoken? What was Hugh's middle name? Did he have any sisters? Did he believe in soviets? Who was Cecilia? What color were her eyes? Hair? Was she tall? Why did Mr. Cothran disapprove of Mr. Sturtevant going into business? Did he think Senator Calhoun a great man? Who was Miss Deering?

Later on they saw "Broken Blossoms" at the Rialto. Anne was lost in the picture; as closely as did the orchestra she followed every theme with eyes and lips. When the prize fighter beat his fragile little daughter, Anne writhed under the blows; when the Chinese boy with all the dignity of the Orient in his face made worshipful love, she loved him in return; and when he brought the body of the dead girl back to his shop and performed his simple, extravagant rites, his desolation was Anne's too. Hugh saw the tears she tried to conceal. Then it was all over; a

cheap, typical comedy was flashed on and the orchestra settled in relief back into jazz.

"If you don't mind, I think we'd better go now," she said and Hugh, sentimental as a Teuton, squeezed her arm. He felt suddenly that they had between them now a tremendous mutual experience. But outside he made fun of the picture and was ashamed of his softness and glad they were about to meet Cecilia.

They waited half an hour at the Lafayette before Blaine and Cecilia, who had been at a late dinner, called for them in Cecilia's electric. It was true; Cecilia did like "funny" people and she welcomed Anne excitedly, ordering her to sit with her in the back seat. Anne was just as excited and if Cecilia stared and asked all sorts of questions, Anne stared as much and answered each question carefully. Her eyes were unnaturally bright; the pink was burning through the olive in her cheeks but she was too excited to know how tired she was. She thought Cecilia a wonderful creature in her black furs, and marvelled at her earrings when the stones in them caught the reflection of passing street lamps. When Hugh leaned back to whisper at Cecilia, Anne thought them prince and princess—surely they were in love! How gay and at home he was with her! She had never seen him like this! He seemed so happy and dominating. She was not jealous but



she felt very little and shabby. Yet when Hugh turned to Anne, Cecilia, catching a silhouette of the two faces against the snow beyond the window, was sure that he liked the strange girl more than was quite pleasing. There was a deference in his manner and a vague sort of tenderness.

They stopped at Blaine's for the sled. Blaine tied it to the rear of the electric. He was making himself very pleasant to Anne and wondering what new eccentricity of Hugh's she represented.

It was after eleven when they reached the hill. Already there were nearly a dozen sledding parties—most of them in evening dress. Ruth Durand and Henry were there with Arthur Herrick. A little earlier Arthur had spoken bitterly of the folly of sledding at such an hour and in dinner-coats. Self-conscious clap-trap, he called it! Since the afternoon when he had met the "one woman" in the snow his moodiness and irritability had grown daily; for him a thing denied was a thing madly and increasingly desired. Now that he had come to the hill, though, he was thinking it rather an artistic novelty—this night sledding. He even braced enough to call the snow path down the hill a "ribbon of moonlight." Ruth was amused at this and Henry disgusted.

The big Durand coaster was just beginning the

long slide as Cecilia's party arrived; they did not see Anne.

She was in fairyland! It was such perfect fun! With Hugh steering and Cecilia, Blaine and herself piled on at random she felt the lamps and snow and houses flash by as they sped downward on the first trip. "Oh—h!" said Cecilia. At the bottom of the hill Hugh swerved them sharply to the left, spilling his passengers in a heap. Then the passengers rolled the driver in the snow, crammed it down his collar and into his eyes until he apologized and made promises. Trudging back up the hill they shouted at other parties darting by on the downward trip; everyone seemed to know everyone else. Stella went by with Captain Granville behind enclosing her in his arms to reach the steering stick. Then they were off again themselves with Blaine at the stick and Hugh hanging on precariously until half way down Cecilia pushed him off and he went hurtling into a snow bank, swearing vengeance. Anne wondered about Cecilia's earrings. "Why don't you take them off?" she suggested and Cecilia shouted with laughter.

The time flew faster than the sleds. Unaccountably soon it was four o'clock in the morning and all the other parties except the Durand's had gone. The Durand sled was huge; Henry said they must all take the last trip on it. It was

frightful *melee* when all were aboard. Arthur steered. They shouted and screamed as the great snow craft got slowly under way, then gathered such speed that Anne felt she might not be able to breathe in a moment. "Stick to the ribbon, Arthur," Henry shouted. "Oh—h," Ruth crooned in an hysteria of speed, "ribbon of moonlight, Arthur!" As the poet looked back to grimace at them and shout something at Cecilia a milk wagon turned ponderously into the path ahead at S Street. He saw it the next moment and wrenched sharply at the steering sticks; the big sled tilted slightly and sped straight for a lamp post across the street. Ruth, Cecilia and Henry on the outside jumped clear just in time. Hugh was behind Arthur and pushed him violently sidewise so that, when the sled struck, Arthur went hurtling into a snow bank and Hugh took the post squarely with his right shoulder. Blaine, in rear of Hugh, was cushioned away by Hugh's back, but Anne, kneeling behind, shot clear above the others; her body whipped the post like a flail and fell against Hugh's leg.

He heard her moan—then no sound, only the rigid body and white face and the trouble in her eyes told she was hurt. His shoulder was stabbing with pain.

Dead silence. Then the driver of the milk wagon called out cheerfully. "Anybody hurt?"



"Yes," said Hugh, wondering at his own voice, "drive over as close as you can." No one else spoke. He leaned over Anne. "Is it bad?" he asked. "Not very much," she said, smiling a little and wanting to apologize. The next moment, she fainted. Arthur and Blaine had come up but Hugh waved them aside and lifted the girl from the sled. Very slowly he climbed with her to the wagon beside the driver. It was not until then that Arthur saw her face. It was the girl he had met on the Mall! "My God!" he said loudly, and repeated it softly. Hugh was directing the driver to the Emergency Hospital and saying rather incoherent things. Only Blaine seemed to keep his head; he ordered Arthur into the wagon with Hugh and said the rest should follow in Henry's car. In Hugh's place he would have brought the car down the hill to carry Anne, but it was too late now.

The wagon drove off while Blaine and the rest trudged up the hill. By the time they reached the top Cecilia had recovered speech enough to clutch Blaine's arm and ask how badly he thought Anne was hurt. Her lips were ashy and her jaw quavered as she spoke. She began to talk wildly—she couldn't bear it—she wouldn't go to the hospital—they must let her go home—it was too terrible—she was ill—such a darling little girl—she simply *couldn't* go to the hospital! Blaine



was angry and told her to go on home in her electric. Then she couldn't find the key—didn't feel able to drive! He jumped into her car, tried the control and found it unlocked, helped her in roughly and joined Henry and Ruth in the Chandler. He was sorry a moment later when he remembered how she was shaking with cold and horror. He looked back to see that she had started.

Meanwhile the milk wagon was a thousand years from Nineteenth Street to the hospital. Once during the trip Hugh knew, from the tightening of Anne's body in his arms, that she had regained consciousness. "Drive more carefully," he said to the man. He held her ever so tenderly; it was many days later that she remembered vaguely how he had murmured something about "broken blossoms" and sworn terribly at the driver when the horse slipped. Arthur was crowded in with the milk cases behind.

Ten minutes after their arrival at the hospital the businesslike young doctor came into the ante-room where they were waiting.

"Very bad, I'm afraid," he said, frowning, and disappeared again.

"What stupidity!" said Ruth, "why can't he tell us about it!"

Someone came in from the entrance hall and they all turned nervously to see. It was Cecilia.

She might have been a ghost; her face was so gaunt and white. One of the earrings was gone. Something in her eyes made Ruth almost afraid. "I decided to come," she said briefly. "Have you—heard?" Ruth shook her head, fascinated at the hard, impenetrable look of the girl.

The doctor came out again. What a creature he was with his self-conscious professionalism!

"The spine is twisted," he said, "I've given her morphine and she's sleeping."

Hugh summoned his courage. "Doctor—will she——" he could go no further.

"Won't know for weeks—she may never walk again," said the other in a tone he might have used in refusing a second helping of potatoes. "She won't sleep long—the pulse was too weak for much of the morphia. As the night nurse is ill it would be better if one of you stayed with her."

Arthur was sobbing. "I'll stay," said Ruth. Hugh nodded and said he would wait outside a while. The others prepared to leave.

Cecilia was clutching Ruth's arm. "I'm going to stay, Ruth," she said, "go on home—you're leaving for Poughkeepsie in the morning." She looked at the others defiantly as though they were perfect strangers. For a moment the spiritual tragedy of Cecilia seemed to outweigh the physical tragedy of Anne. Ruth looked at Hugh. "Better let her stay," he said dully.

Arthur decided to remain with Hugh, and was so obdurate and emotional about it that Hugh in a quick flood of anger wanted to throw him out. Finally he tolerated him because it was too much trouble not to.

Cecilia went in with the doctor. For half an hour Hugh and Arthur paced the sidewalk outside, smoking in silence. Then Arthur asked the question he had forgotten until now to ask.

“Who is she, Hugh?”

“Anne McLanahan.”

He stopped still. “Anne McLanahan!” he exclaimed loudly, “my God! You don’t mean—the girl Sturtevant brought here from Bloody Hollow?”

“Yes, why?”

“Oh my God, Hugh—don’t tell me that—I can’t believe that about her!”

Hugh faced him, amazed. Then gradually he began to comprehend what Arthur meant and the color surged back into his haggard cheeks. The self-control that had seemed a very part of him since the accident, snapped. He seized the poet’s collar and began to shake. The more he shook the more frenzied he became——

“You damn fool!” he sobbed, “you rotten-minded damn fool—if you ever say—think—anything about that girl—I’ll—I’ll——” he paled suddenly, released his grip, and clutched at his

own shoulder. Then he fainted and fell down in the snow against the stone coping of the hospital yard.

A broken collar bone had spared Arthur further indignities.



## *Chapter Sixteen*

**T**O be the Deering family lawyer was to be more than a mere member of the bar. The post required alternately a diplomat, a conspirator, a politician, a headsman. John Hampton had held it for fifteen years and was still learning.

For one thing there were the philanthropies of Robert Deering and his proneness to scientific excess. The large-natured gentleman was forever at point of launching some immense imaginative venture destined to revolutionize commerce, art, mechanics, or astronomy, and John Hampton's most recent task had been to dissuade him from investing upwards of a million dollars in the assembly of vast electric forces for an attempted communication with the planet Mars. When not at odds with his client on some such proposition as this, the lawyer was busy discouraging him from prodigious philanthropies of one sort or another by which he might divest himself of the greater part of the fortune amassed by his father. Much of the lawyer's success at these offices came from the fact that he had enough imagination himself to sympathize with most of

the schemes and to admire devoutly the daring, dimensions and generosity of the mind that conceived them.

But John Hampton was Mrs. Deering's lawyer too, and in that rôle he was called upon to do almost everything he had resolved not to do when he began to practice twenty years earlier. In the Campaigner's service he was drawn to strange pastures. For instance, there were certain delicate arrangements with the gentlemen of the "*Tattler*", fashion's yellow journal and social refuse heap. Then there were "inquiries" to be made into the circumstances and activities of some of Mrs. Deering's "very dear friends"; there were *ententes cordiales* to be established for her in socially dominant quarters; members of the *corps diplomatique* (who, with a single exception, outranked all others in the social hierarchy) must be reached by fair or foul means and drawn into the Deering entourage; there were also certain tid-bits of gossip to be inspired and passed to the customary retailers. And always there was his own taste and conscience to be suppressed.

Of course, he had also, as executor of the will of the first Mr. Deering, the task of watching the sundry investments, continuing in effect various stipulations of the will, accounting for expenditures and maintaining income without depleting

the principal of the estate. It was his office on Alice's twenty-first birthday to execute the transfer to her of properties and securities representing several millions of dollars, as provided in the will.

In time he would be Alice's lawyer too—whatever that might involve. He thought of her as still a child and was more amused than impressed at the lively interest she was showing just now in her own affairs. He was astonished, though, when she came to him one day with a request that he look into an oil project known as the Talbot Company, suggesting that Arthur Herrick, as a local official, might have the necessary information. He talked to her, as he would have talked to her father, of the instability of oil stocks, and though he later made the inquiries she desired he had not spoken of it to her, believing that her interest was casual and that she had forgotten the whole thing.

One evening when he had dined at the Deering's and had said good-night after two hours over cigars and a "housing at cost" proposition with Robert Deering, he found Alice in evening dress in the library below. She was bound for a dance. "The first in two months and the Judge must come with her as far as Raushers!" He thought he had never seen her so radiantly handsome. Yes, the daughter of the house was grow-

ing up; there was a subtle sort of maturity about her of late! Within the year she had become a woman—and rather a magnificent one at that! How tall and graceful she was in that black dress! And what a face! All the artist left in the lawyer acknowledged the chiseled features, the smooth classic brow, the thoroughbred arch of the nose, the full, humorous mouth and the firm “fighting” chin.

She was silent for a time as the car rolled down New Hampshire Avenue. When she spoke it was casually, as if conversation must be made.

“Oh, did you look up the Talbot Company, Judge?”

He assumed his professional manner, mantling his eyebrows and letting his hand fall ponderously on his knee.

“I did,” he said firmly. “The company is, as I guessed, one of those overnight, mushroom growths. I haven’t been told why you are interested, my dear, but its—no good. They raised fifty thousand on a stock issue and have spent substantially all of it in boring. Found a little oil, I believe, one or two fifteen-barrel wells—hardly enough to pay the expense of marketing.”

She was powdering her nose. “Do the owners still believe in it?”

He was annoyed that the thing must even be discussed. “I suppose they do. I saw young Her-



rick and his friend Sturtevant yesterday—crowing over their fifteen-barrel gushers. Pair of young fools!” He was beginning to think she might have bought some of the stock.

“So—they would believe they were selling a, er, valuable thing if some one bought them out, I suppose!”

“If some one bought them out!” the lawyer snorted, “they couldn’t give it away. It makes no difference how valuable they think it is!”

“Gilchrist is so sentimentally honorable——” she began, then changed the subject. “By the way, did Mr. Cox buy that stock for me you and dad discussed all through dinner the other night? What was the name?”

“Western Leasing. Yes—transferred in your name last Saturday. Now *that* is a thing—they’re prepared to stake thirty thousand acres of oil land in Wyoming as soon as the President signs the Leasing Act—no charges except royalties if oil is found. Your father owns a controlling interest.”

“What did I pay for my stock?”

“A hundred and five thousand with commissions to Cox. That’s the thing you signed for last week. You have a thousand shares.”

“Oh, yes, I see,” she said absently and John Hampton wished he knew just what it was she did see. But the car had stopped at Raushers

and she was gone before he could cross-question. Also, excellent lawyer that he was, he understood that his new client would not be an easy one for cross-questioning.

Inside, Blaine Todd was waiting on the red plush, wondering why Alice Deering had sought him out as escort for to-night. But he was glad enough to be seen with her at a dance; it looked well along the receiving line and identified him indirectly with the British Embassy set. This in spite of the fact that he was always vaguely afraid of her because he suspected her of understanding him. There was one time, at least, just after the war, when she had quite understood—and had dismissed him for it! But to-night she was radiant and flattered him with her eyes. The inanities of the receiving line were quickly accomplished and in a moment they were on the floor, floating through the dance with long, quick strides, nodding or making faces as they threaded in and out and around the maze of couples.

The timorous, dinner-coated, ghouls who stand on alternate feet along the side lines ready to pounce upon favorites with an eager “may I break” or dexterously to fail of vision when others and less favored pass with helpless and hopeful glances, were all whispers and pouncings at sight of Alice. In her direction there began a perpetual succession, and rarely did a dinner-coat

hold her longer than a few steps before the imperious "may I break" sounded dismissal over his shoulder. Like Antæus who grew seven-fold in strength each time he touched his mother Earth, the Buccaneer was more popular, more contagious, with each shift of partner. Hers was all the politician's sense for crowds and response to them. To-night, after the long retirement, the very Spirit of the Dance seemed to envelop her and become incarnate in her. Quite aware of the stir she made along the side-lines, she exploited it. With bold eyes she answered the impassioned ones of the little South American diplomat! warm hands returned Captain Granville's impulsive pressure! nimble the words that met Colonel Dorsey's badinage! graceful the mockery that acknowledged Winship Tennant's intoxicated bow! and honest the laughter that pealed over the bashful sallies of Henry Durand!

On with the dance! She swings from the American Navy to fervent France! *May I break?* She scolds an English boy for treading on her toes, then charms him with forgiveness! On with the dance! Chanting with half-closed eyes, she stirs the drab spirit of an austere Netherlands *attaché* until he catches himself weaving word music! *May I break?* and she is all laughter, motion and life!

Across the floor by the tall window draperies,

Cecilia Lee is balancing on tiptoes and thrumming with white fingers as on some invisible keys. At the punchbowl Blaine has found Myrtis and begun his evening's work. Down the floor by the great mirror are Millicent Bronson and a sandy-haired *bon vivant*, hating each other and looking sidewise for help. "Millicent's stuck" the side-lines whisper, and strike her from their list of safeties. Nearby, in a corner, Helen Gary and Nestor Swan, hoyden spirits, are doing a wierd squatting dance of their own invention, ruthlessly ugly. Watching enviously is Winship Tennant, who wipes the perspiration of impatience from his brow and thinks darkly of the matrimonial infidelity of Mr. Adyngton-Sims who has left him to dance indefinitely with Mrs. Adyngton-Sims. To cut this woman's throat, thinks Winship, would be best of sport! Mrs. Deering has found Captain Granville and is accusing him of something with a youthful finger. Beyond her, little Bettey Lorrimer is indulging her secret passion for Boernstein, the orchestra leader, under pretext of asking him to play "*Humoresque*." Her partner is disgusted; so is Boernstein.

Hugh Cothran is nowhere to be seen, nor Arthur Herrick. In the center of the floor, laughing at a bobbed-haired girl in pink who is throwing imaginary oyster crackers into her mouth



with one hand, is Gilchrist Sturtevant; (it is interesting side-play—he wipes fanciful crumbs from her lips with a handkerchief). Seeing the “great young man” thus, Alice chatters very hard, goes for two glasses of punch, and is off again with Colonel Dorsey. When they dance past Gilchrist and the pink girl a moment later she catches his eye; the black and the gray meet again and Alice, blushing, smiles a faint recognition; Gilchrist is startled and returns the smile with automatic cordiality, then seems to begrudge the cordiality.

Smiles they were though, and even if one was faint with far-spread experience and the other begrudged as soon as born—they arrived.

“Ouch! you’re hurting my hand,” said the pink girl.

“Its too nice for that,” he agreed, absently, “come sit on the steps and I’ll hold it.”

“Got a cigarette?”

“Two—and a match. Yes.”

But on the stairway he forgot about her hand. He didn’t even smoke, and his own hand shook a little when he held the match for her. Below them were Stella and a boy, deep in whispers.

“Oh, well,” said the pink girl, shrugging, “tell me about yourself.”

He shook his head. “Hugh Cothran says a man talks of himself to a girl only if he is in love

with her or if he finds her so dull there is nothing else to talk of."

"Then you aren't in love with me! Huh!"

"And you aren't dull—your insight proves it."

"Talk about *me* then. Nice boy!"

"You," he said, smiling queerly, "are an anarchist. A bright cheeked, soft-haired anarchist. The only rule you know, my dear, is that there is no rule. You are also a drunkard—too drunk with to-day to remember to-morrow. You haven't enough sense to be afraid and you don't know enough to be worried, so you are a dauntless optimist. There are many others like you and I envy you all."

She was rubbing her lips with a lip-stick. "Aren't you sweet," she said, "you interest me. Go on!"

He felt very tired. "It's the supper dance," he said, "let's go up!"

At supper Alice sat with Captain Granville on the divan above the entrance stair. The Englishman had decided that she was much older than her mother, and was flattering her with his confidential views on British colonialism, quite aware that he had only half her attention.

Arthur Herrick's head emerged above the landing at their feet. Arthur was arriving late. He looked dissipated; there were rings under his

eyes. Seeing Alice with Granville he was for not seeing her. He hated Englishmen. He had this hatred carefully analyzed and could recite it on occasion. In the first place, insufferable arrogance—national and personal! Habit of patronizing everything from Americans whom they despised as crude colonials to Almighty God whom they tolerated as a sort of Cromwellian Englishman Himself! Even an Englishman, though, Arthur thought, is less repugnant than the Washington-girl-with-an-Englishman! Girls proud as Lucifer with Americans will grovel for any foreigner and in particular for an Englishman! Most of the *débutantes* this year are more flattered if an Englishman swears at them than if an American proposes marriage! Whole business un-American, unpatriotic, undignified, etc., etc!

Perhaps the real reason for Arthur's dislike was a passionate jealousy. Because he was an artist and loved all expressions of "form," he envied the Britisher his impeccable front, his perfect and benevolent orientation of the universe upon himself, his inexhaustible *savoir faire*. In his heart Arthur would a thousand times rather have been a Britisher than an American; he even wished he dared use the broad "a".

So he was passing by—like a true American. Alice hailed him imperiously——

"Halt! Hello!"

"Oh, hello," he responded as if he had just seen them. "How are you Captain Granville?"

It was hard to be formal with Alice present but Arthur tried. Granville did not trouble to conceal a conviction that the poet was a bore and that his early departure was awaited. He was dumfounded to hear Alice say presently——

"The colonialism idea, *mon capitaine*—I'm very much interested. Promise to come back for another dance. This is for Arthur—it was—er, arranged this morning. You see he's leaving in a few minutes and he has something to tell me. Oh, there's the music now. But do be careful of the Countess Clementina—I'm sure you were flirting with her."

He looked seriously at Arthur and was suddenly and illogically convinced that this Alice Deering was a most extraordinarily interesting girl. Different from the *mater*! He rather liked being dismissed in this way!

"Aw-right, old top, *a bientôt*," he drawled good-humoredly, and left.

"Fee fi fo fum," said Arthur, tossing away the cigarette he had lighted to cover his discomfort. "Good for you, Alice. It's provincial—really it is—the way this silly bunch worship a foreigner. It's the old toadying of the province to the cosmopolis."



"Cosmopolis? What's that? Don't be silly—he's adorable."

"Not as bad as some of them, perhaps. But why, why make little white gods of them! Listen—the real capital of the world to-day is Washington. We're the richest, best organized, most able——"

She was pinching him. "Don't make speeches to me, sir. You sound Prussian. Tell me—you look like Midnight's oldest—where were you last night?"

"Good Lord! You don't mean you haven't heard about Hugh and—and Anne McLanahan?"

"I certainly do. What about them? Who is Anne McLanahan? Answer me, stupid!"

"She's the girl Sturtevant brought to Washington from Bloody Hollow." There was drama in his throat. He told the whole story of the sledding party and the accident, not even omitting Hugh's behavior before he had fainted. And, because his spirit cried for a confidante, he went further and told of his first meeting with Anne.

Alice was biting her lip.

"After all, Arthur, you *are* a bit of a fool. Fancy believing that rot about—Gilchrist! The girl—is she crippled? It's terrible!"

She was silent a moment. Arthur lighted another cigarette.

"You must take me to see her in the morning."

"All right. I will. Hugh was—of course he was all overwrought last night. I never really believed the story except that just at the moment—when he told me who she was—it sort of floored me. Sturtevant says Hugh had him arrange for a specialist to come over from Johns Hopkins."

"I think it's the most pitiful thing I ever knew. I don't see how you *could* come here to-night?"

"Well—I—nothing else to do. Promised Cess to take her to Childs later on. She was with us last night herself."

"Dancing's bread and meat to her," said Alice with some emphasis; Cecilia was being hailed the most popular débutante of the season. "She's careful about her feelings—only feels what she wants to."

"I don't know, Alice. Cess is a high-strung sort. People misunderstand her." Hugh had shaken "one" woman from the poet's sky and he was yearning now towards a new evening star.

"Hugh's a dear," Alice mused, "and with his collar bone broken!"

"Sturtevant was with him all afternoon. Says Hugh's worrying about his refusal to consider that political job Senator Calhoun wants him to take—Industrial Relations Commission. I don't blame Sturtevant a bit; he's sick of politics. We're going to make a big thing of this oil business—looks too good to be true now." Arthur was

rambling absently. "Suppose you and he have forgotten the, er—late unpleasantness. I say, Alice, look at Cess—grown up wonderfully, hasn't she—never thought she'd be such a hit—that Frenchman's making an ass of himself about her! Come along with us to Childs to-night, will you? Remember the night you started them all singing in there and the manager wanted to put you out? What did——?"

"Yes, I remember—last spring," she interrupted, "he—Gilchrist was along. I was behaving like the very devil. I think he wanted to throttle the manager and me both."

"Who? Sturtevant? I didn't know him then. Fine chap, really he is, Alice. How do you feel about him now?"

"Why, I feel—oh—all right, thanks, how do you feel? Come on old chatterbox, I feel as if I'd like to dance." She pulled him to his feet and ran furiously up the stairs ahead of him.

## *Chapter Seventeen*

**N**ORTH Nine Nine Nine."

The coin was in the slot, the number given, but Hugh had changed his mind. After all what was it he wanted to say to Cecilia? It was the third time this had happened in two days—a total loss of fifteen cents. He returned the receiver slowly and pushed at the booth door with his sound shoulder. Well, it was late, anyhow—he was due at the hospital! Call up at noon. Jove, what a thoroughbred she had been that night with Anne! With Anne! Ah!

The specialist from Hopkins had taken more than an ordinary interest in Anne's case. The calm oval face on the pillow, the apologetic, self-scorning smile and shy, thoughtful eyes, smote him beyond mere professional concern. "She helps me with her spirit," he told Hugh, "when-ever it is possible for the spirit to control the flesh she wins."

There were times, though, as to-day, when the sheer physical pain of it would fill her eyes and the firm hot hands would clench and unclench until the moment had passed and she could smile



again. The doctor had just left when Hugh came. Seeing all the story of recent harsh experience in the soft face he felt himself stabbed with her trouble more than he could ever have been with any of his own.

“Better to-day!” he insisted, trying to smile.

“Oh, *much!*” she agreed wanly.

He couldn’t bear it. Suddenly a hot, protesting impulse flung him into the chair at the bedside, drew his free hand to caress the fevered cheek and brow while he muttered all manner of foolish things——

“Dear, dear—they hurt you so, don’t they—what can I do—they mustn’t hurt you again—I—they shan’t——”

Her eyes became all wonder and unashamed delight.

“But it doesn’t hurt now, Mr. Coth—Hugh,” she said.

There were tears in his eyes, yet, strangely enough, he thought of Cecilia for just an instant. Then he looked soberly at the crippled girl. “I love you,” he said as if amazed at his own words, “Anne McLanahan, do you hear me saying I love you? I think—all my life I’ve been looking for you.”

He pressed her hand against his cheek and kissed it. “Now I’ve found you—you’ll never

go away. You are for me—and I for you—always.”

She lay quite still and watched him as if he were a long distance away—as though she were lost in some dim dream. Gradually there came into her eyes recognition, sudden intimacy, enchantment. Her lips trembled with tenderness. Then the dream passed, she turned her face to the pillow and sobbed like a very little girl, sobbed as she never had before in her life.

“Oh, Hugh, if I could only walk—I can’t—perhaps I can never walk!”

She was imploring him as though he were Fate itself. His left arm slipped from the sling in which he had worn it for two weeks and with both arms now he held her——

“Angel—if you never walk I’ll love you enough to make up for it—I will—really I will. But you *shall* walk—you’ve got to—I believe it—know it.” He kissed her eyes. “Poor little thing—such a damned rotten time—cry some more, dear.”

At this the sun came out; tears turned to laughter. “I don’t want to cry any more,” she said, dabbing at her eyes with Hugh’s handkerchief, “but—but this is such a nice place to cry.”

Then the nurse came in and it was embarrassing and there was much confusion while Anne was returned to her proper place in bed and Hugh’s left arm to its proper place in the sling. He felt that

some explanation was due, and at the same time was determined not to make one. To relieve the painful silence he engaged nurse in a rather intense conversation on the after effects of influenza. Anne smiled interest but with only the barest notion of what was being said. When he brought her brilliantly into the talk by asking how often Alice had been to see her and how she liked the Buccaneer, the invalid replied with animation "Yes, my father had influenza last fall." Nurse's smile was most insulting.

He left the hospital and walked Pennsylvania Avenue, loving everyone he passed, entranced with odors of hot popcorn, gasoline, ham and eggs, printer's ink. After an hour he bounded into Gilchrist's office and found his friend in conference with Arthur Herrick and a nervous, lean little man who was tapping at the arm of his chair with an unlighted cigarette. The interruption was apparently disturbing for the three were not at all responsive to the smiles Hugh poured over them. The little man with the cigarette looked bewildered when the newcomer grasped his hand heartily, proclaiming with every semblance of delight "Jove, I'm pleased to meet you, I am indeed, Mr.—er——"

"Cox," said Gilchrist, annoyed. Hugh shouldn't drink before lunch!

Insensitive to the rebuke in his friend's eyes,

Hugh clapped him on the shoulder and shook Arthur's hand violently. He smiled insanely at the poet until, as if only just recognizing him, he frowned, then smiled again.

"I interrupted you, gentlemen," he announced graciously, "shall I get out?"

"Sit down, Hugh," said Gilchrist patiently.

The little man was staring. "You don't remember me, Mr. Cothran. I was order clerk at Hibb's when you were trading there before the war. You——"

"Ye gods, I do at that. The margins you've dunned me for, man! I used to hold you personally responsible."

"Hope luck's turned for you by now, Mr. Cothran. I'm talking to these gentlemen about Western Leasing."

"Western Leasing?" Hugh remembered the conversation about this stock he had overheard between Robert Deering and his lawyer on the day of his walk with Alice. Because of what he had heard then he had felt in honor bound against speculating in that particular issue. But he was sure of its value.

"Best thing I know," he said, "are you selling it?"

"There isn't any more for sale," the broker smiled, looking at Sturtevant.

"Hugh," said Gilchrist nervously, "Mr. Cox



offers us five thousand shares of Western Leasing for our entire holdings in the Talbot Company. We've struck oil on the Talbot claim, you know, and the prospect is splendid."

Hugh whistled incredulity. "What's the idea, anyhow, Cox? I thought you said there was no more on the market?"

"There isn't," said Mr. Cox, "I'm acting for a party holding a block of the original."

"I don't get it," said the other, "why does your party want the Talbot Company?" The implication in his question did not flatter the Talbot Company. Arthur and Gilchrist looked severe.

"You've never believed in the company, Hugh," said Gilchrist, "naturally you can't see what's plain to us. Somebody has wind of it that we've got a big thing out there."

There was a peculiar tolerance in Mr. Cox's smile. Intuition leaped to Hugh's enlightenment where logic would not, for surely this was most preposterously illogical.

"Guess I'm with you on this, Cox," he said slowly, "your party may smell a lot of oil in the Talbot Company all right, but that isn't the point."

"Then what is the point?" said Gilchrist rather helplessly.

"The point is that Western Leasing is sure. The President signed the bill last week and there's

no gamble at all now. Man alive, Gik, do you realize that this stock he's offering you has a market value of seventy-five thousand? You and Arthur couldn't realize more than twenty thousand on your Talbot holdings even if you tied them up in ribbon. And it's still a gamble. Oh sure, I know—you may strike thousand-barrel gushers but, damn it, Gik, it isn't your line. That's what I mean. It's for loafers and mystics like Ar—like me. Not you!" His earnestness made him forget the others. Gilchrist was tearing bits of paper into small pieces and rolling them between his fingers; his whole manner spoke a desperate indecision. The man whose nature it was to make his own way seemed to have lost all his morale in a new and, for him, unnatural reliance upon Chance to make it for him.

The broker tossed his cigarette into the wastebasket and rose. He had intuitions himself. "No hurry about this, gentlemen," he said, "I'll phone you in a day or so and see how you feel about it."

Arthur rose, too. He was beginning to hate Hugh thoroughly. Hate him for the hold he had on Gilchrist, hate him for his cheerfulness and healthiness, hate him for being the very things Arthur wanted to be himself.

When they were gone Hugh sat on the edge of the desk and kicked the wastebasket thoughtfully.

A book fell off to the floor; he picked it up and examined the inscription—it was the volume of Swinburne Arthur had given Gilchrist. “Decadent stuff” he muttered, tossing the volume aside. Gilchrist’s eyes were wavering, half defiant, half apologetic. Hugh remembered how he had always liked the other’s direct, self-confident way of looking at people. He spoke coldly.

“Don’t you see this is your chance to get out of a rotten mess? It doesn’t go with you—this luck business—you know it too. Weak—damned weak, I say. It isn’t you, either. Big things you’ve got to do and you’re letting them slide.” He kicked viciously at the wastebasket and turned searchingly to his friend’s eyes. “Lining up with a lot of get-rich-quick folks who want to beat the game, not play it.”

The other’s silence smote him like a blow in the face. He regretted the harshness of his manner.

“I’m not criticizing you,” he said whimsically, “I’m just giving you hell. Oh—get out of it, Gik, won’t you, old man? Jove, we’re a long way from that afternoon at Rheims last year, aren’t we? Remember the sunset?”

“It went to our heads,” Gilchrist said, smiling. Yet the allusion brought him sudden and poignant memories of a day in France, just before sailing home, when he and Hugh had pledged themselves to an emancipated world.

His friend stumbled on, groping with all his might for hidden and long silent chords upon which he might play. He could not feel that his efforts brought back any of the old enthusiasms but at least they cleared away some of the reserve and misunderstanding which had come between the two since the election. More than once he recalled the day at Rheims.

Gilchrist seemed absorbed in his own thoughts and it was not until Hugh was leaving that he spoke.

"Whether you're right or not," he said, with something of the old-time positiveness, "I'm glad to have you say what you have. Friendship like yours is the only abiding thing in this rather inexplicable world, Hugh. Don't think I haven't appreciated it. And you've given me a lot to think about, old Gascon!"

Later in the afternoon, for his own satisfaction, Hugh telephoned Mr. Cox. "Want to ask you a bald question," he said, "What's your real opinion of the Talbot Company stock?"

He could not see but he was convinced that the broker was grinning. "Speaking man to man, Mr. Cothran, I wouldn't give half a dollar for the whole issue."

"I thought so. Then either you're a rotten broker or your client is crazy—how about it?"



“Neither,” said Mr. Cox, “my client is a woman.”

Putting various twos together Hugh might have identified the extraordinary client—if he had not been drunk with the wonder of a girl’s face on a white, hospital bed.

Among other feelings, he felt strangely important. And domestic. He was veteran of his full quota of romances but never before had he experienced this sense of domesticity and fitness, of safe and final harborage. Strange though that that telephone number should be repeating itself in the back of his head—North Nine Nine Nine! This with Anne was so enormously different from the Cecilia business! That was fantastic—the most fantastic of all! He had actually avoided a closer or more constant relationship with Cecilia because of a half-confessed wish that the fancy he wove about her might not be torn with any touches of reality. Often, when he might have had her actual presence, he had preferred a quiet corner at the club from which he could write to her. Jealous for his fancy and stubbornly refusing to put to the test the things he so much wanted to believe, he had built for himself a lovely, fictitious Cecilia and lightly adored her! But Anne—Anne was real! There was no playing at love with her, no fancy-weaving. He had no inclination to perform antics for Anne, no

self-consciousness in what he felt, no egotism. There was a verse he remembered, one his mother liked, from Tennyson——

“Love took up the Harp of Life and smote on all the  
chords with might,  
Smote the chord of Self that, trembling, passed in music  
out of sight.”

Oh, the blessed little girl, he thought! North  
Nine Nine Nine—damn that number!

## *Chapter Eighteen*

**A**LICE was inspecting her mirror while the maid dressed her hair. Two years ago when she had been called the handsomest débutante she had frankly agreed, with much zest. But now there were no more thrills in being handsome and she was asking something else of the mirror. "Spirituality" was the word that occurred to her. Like Cecilia? Not at all—Cecilia's face was spiritual but nothing else about her was! Well, why spirituality anyhow? Perhaps it was that spiritual beauty lasts longer; she was sure her own face would be commonplace at forty when the color and smoothness were gone. She remembered Hugh Cothran's mother who was fifty and beautiful in a rare, intangible way that had nothing to do with color or surface or feature. She thought of "reducing" and then decided against arriving at spirituality in that manner. Oh, well, Anne McLanahan was spiritual and one wouldn't really want to look like Anne! Anne was too sweet! In many visits to the hospital she had grown quite fond of the crippled girl, of course, but she didn't want to

look like her! Arthur said they were Victorians—Anne and Hugh. Really, Miss Dupont's was a rotten School—what *were* Victorians?

"I'll finish it myself, Melcina," she said to the maid. "Now listen carefully. When Mr. Sturtevant comes you must tell him I came in late and say I'll be down in about ten minutes. No matter when he comes—ten minutes." However neglectful of the Victorian Age Miss Dupont's may have been, the psychology courses must have been thorough.

For twenty minutes after Gilchrist's arrival was announced Alice sat in her bedroom before the woodfire—thinking. Principally it was of what Hugh had told her on the day of their walk in the snow—of the afternoon he and Gilchrist had passed at Rheims. Once she gave a queer little sound and murmured "my dear, my dear"—and twice she said "damn." When the hands of the silver clock on the mantel reached the proper place she powdered her nose and descended.

He greeted her with careful cordiality. She did not like this; if he had been stern or sulky or belligerent she would have been better pleased.

"You wonder why I asked you to come?" she said quietly.

"Why, no," he replied, lounging against a table, "It was nice of you to ask me, Alice. We can be



friends, I hope. I'm not so much a fool as I was last spring, you know."

"It's a pity," she exclaimed, hating his suavity. But this, she knew, was just the sort of thing she had intended not to say.

"May we smoke?" he asked. "This, er—re-union is rather a nerve wrecker."

"If you like," she smiled, "I'm not smoking. You're heavily masked, Gilchrist, aren't you?"

He began to see that this was an Alice he had never met before and one who was apparently determined to quarrel. The situation angered him; he had so determined a belief that she was eliminated from his scheme of things that now he found himself unpleasantly startled at receiving any sort of positive impression of her personality. He had accepted her invitation to call with vague anticipation of an occasion which would be altogether his own and would provide him enough of drama to exhaust some of the perplexity and depression he had felt since the talk with Hugh. And now, instead, it looked as if Alice meant to take for herself the leading rôle. Jealously he asserted himself.

"In civilized communities it's customary to wear some sort of mask, isn't it? Really, Alice, why should you and I, of all people, unmask for each other? What have we in common that entitles me to presume so—or to be honored so?"

She felt a little thrill; here was a bitterness which might overlies flattering things! On second thought, however, she rejected the thrill and decided wisely that this bitterness was bigger than she was in his soul. She remembered what Hugh had said—that Gilchrist was disillusioned about everything in which he had ever been interested. In an instant she changed her whole conception and plan. For the first time in her life she was ready now to sacrifice herself, her vanity of success, for the good of another's soul. The game she knew so well how to play, she was about to play against herself. For the service she could do him could only be done at cost of a new bitterness in his heart against her.

"I suppose you're right, Gilchrist—we don't want to be immodest."

They talked idly of idle things for a while. Then she led again.

"You've been a great fool, my dear, haven't you? I've heard lately that you've come to your senses and—and that's why I sent for you. I wanted you to know how glad I am."

"Come to my senses?" he repeated.

"Yes. I've been talking to Arthur. He says you've given up this idea of reforming the world. You're going in for business and social success." She used the word "social" carefully and won an instant flash in his eyes.

"Social success!" he exclaimed, and his jaw set in a way she knew well. "The chief end of man, I suppose!" His head was thrown back; he was beginning to remember. "Alice, I hope the just Gods strike me dumb before I ever am a social success!"

She lighted a cigarette. It was a good word!

"Oh, don't be so damnably noble, Gilchrist. You know very well what I mean. Everyone is out for himself in this world and you are a man to twist things your way. Why should you go in for this drivel about Humanity—you see now it gets you nothing! The trouble is you fell in with a lot of dreamers like Senator Calhoun and Hugh and they nearly ruined you."

Sneered at by this woman, of all women, the gods Gilchrist had almost forgotten came rushing back to him. Intolerable that Alice Deering should scoff at his friends! Humanity! What did she know of Humanity? The anger that welled in him, the accumulation of ten months' restraint, was more than he could control. He crossed blindly to her chair and put both hands on her shoulders with a grip that hurt.

"You little fool! You profane little fool! I'm glad you said that—if you hadn't I might have forgotten how much those things and those friends are to me. I might have forgotten how pitifully little you and your worlds are! Yes, I



might have forgotten how much better it is to be discouraged and defeated and disillusioned—than to be empty headed, empty hearted, empty souled!”

His eyes were blazing into Alice’s but her own were bright with a strange and selfless triumph. The grip on her shoulder was unmerciful. She took one of his hands and pulled it into her lap. She had won—for him—and now she was free to fight for herself.

“Dear fool,” she whispered, “I love you.”

He turned away, roughly, “More profanity. I’ll go now.”

Her eyes were closed. She made no motion. He stood over her, brooding and tired. Nearby he could hear the clock ticking. He tossed back his head and set his teeth as if to recover some lost advantage.

Then her eyes opened full on him and held him. Held him until the scorn and anger in his own turned to sorrow and the sorrow to something else. For seconds, or years, the black and gray communed again until he dropped to the arm of her chair, drew her face desperately to his and kissed her, kissed her twice and many times.

“Oh, you’re beautiful—your eyes are beautiful,” he moaned, half-exulting.

There was a fragrance in her hair, her cheeks were warm, her lips trembled. He could feel the



quick breath come and go from her body. Time was a word, a thing of no consequence while he held her so. His consciousness of her was complete; not for an instant could he forget whom he held, forget in the intoxication of soft flesh and contour that she was a personality, a dominance, a mystery, a subtlety. She was a woman but, more than that, she was Alice Deering. In another sense he felt it was she who held him here by the firelight and that there was nothing in the world so low or so high that her will could not send him to it at this moment.

She sat up straight, drawing herself free.

"Are you going now?" she said coolly.

"Now! Yes," he stammered and instantly felt himself a stranger to her as though this had never happened.

He never quite remembered how he found his coat and hat or left the house.

Great rivers and great decisions, traced back to their headwaters, pass through strange, incongruous valleys. Senator Calhoun was too little an explorer to trace back to its inspiration a note he found in his morning mail.

"Dear Senator: I know you will forgive my apparent inconsistency when I tell you that I have decided to accept the President's nomination to the Industrial Commission. Your tact and enthusiasm will, I am sure, do

more than anything else for me in the Senate struggle. The opposition of the White interests, which is as persistent as it is inexplicable, is undoubtedly the principal thing in the way of confirmation. I am rushing this to you before leaving for a week in the mountains. Wish you were coming with me. I shall never forget your 'Armageddon.'

"Affectionately,

"GILCHRIST STURTEVANT."

But there was another to whom exploration was very life. When Alice, breakfasting in bed one morning, read that Commander Sturtevant, "co-author with Senator Calhoun of the Industrial Relations Act," had accepted a nomination to the Commission and that a fight over his confirmation was brewing in the Senate, she sobbed a little and murmured, apropos of nothing,

"Fool! dear fool—I love you!"

## Chapter Nineteen

MR. ALEC BROWN was not only Chairman of the Essex County Democratic Committee, editor of the *Essex Gazette*, and postmaster for the township. He was also a woodsman and had hunted with the best. Contemplating his host across the log-walled room, however, he decided that Gilchrist Sturtevant was no woodsman at all and knew as little about hunting as he did about weather. Three days as the young man's invited and almost abducted guest at his mountain camp had induced in Mr. Brown so lively a sense of the other's incapacity for the avowed purposes of the outing that the most cheerful thing in his consciousness was the fact that the "vacation" would end in four days and that Essex was only twenty miles distant by sleigh. On the first day after their arrival Gilchrist had let a beautiful buck lope away from him without firing a shot; on the second day when they had startled two deer at the foot of Hurricane, Mr. Brown had waited politely to give his friend opportunity to make his first kill—only to find that Gilchrist had come away with no cartridges in

his magazine or belt. And, to-day, which was the third day, Mr. Brown had risen at six to find his host breakfasted and gone, not to return until nightfall and then without rifle or explanation.

"I calculate," he remarked after supper, "you wasn't hunting to-day."

"Not to-day; I had some letters to mail. Walked down to Lewis."

"That's twelve—fourteen miles by the new trail." Mr. Brown was resolved to be sociable at any rate. "Republican postmaster—Whittemore. Reckon he'll be going to the legislature come next September."

"Oh, that so?"

"Yes, I reckon. They ain't any Democrats to oppose him. That McLanahan is up for the socialist-laborers."

"Humph!"

"He's got his Frenchman out making speeches for him. I calculate the French ain't very good speakers, Mister Sturtevant—they're too sort of hasty."

"Humph!"

Mr. Brown surrendered. "The horses haven't had their feed, yet," he said. "Reckon I'll do that now. You set right there, because I know it's sorter restful after walking fourteen miles."

When he had gone Gilchrist continued to sit



with long legs hugged in his arms before the leaping new fire. His body was cramped and his muscles ached from the long trudge to Lewis. He liked this feeling of discomfort; in his present mood he felt there might be something weak about comfort.

His dramatic sense was pleased with the environment; indeed, had planned it. The log fire darting huge shadows about the room, the measureless quiet outside except for the sifting sound of hard snow against the windowpane, the heavy boots and woolen shirt he wore—all were expressions of self-conscious drama.

It was like him though, after creating this picturesque stage-setting, to forget it altogether and to be aware only of the spiritual crisis that had inspired it. He might just as well have been back in his noisy room in town for all the effect of the camp atmosphere now.

On the floor lay the volume of Swinburne which Arthur had given him. That Gilchrist, who ordinarily cared nothing for poetry, should have troubled to bring this book with him was eloquent of the emotional condition in which he had left Washington. There was a passage running in his head tonight, a thing Arthur had read him once; he opened the book to hunt it by the fire-light——

"We have heard from hidden places  
What love scarce lives and hears,  
We have seen on fervent faces  
The pallor of strange tears,  
We have trod the wine-vat's treasure  
Whence, ripe to steam or stain,  
Foams round the feet of pleasure  
The blood-red must of pain."

"The snake that hides and hisses  
In heaven we twain have known,  
The grief of cruel kisses,  
The joy whose mouth makes moan,  
The pulses' pause and measure  
Where in one furtive vein  
Throbs through the heart of pleasure  
The purpler blood of pain."

Pleasure and pain! Grief of cruel kisses! Ah, they *were* cruel, those kisses! He had never held any woman as he had held Alice. He felt that all kisses must be like that. Men and women meant to each other only pleasure followed with pain. Love was simply the desire for pleasure, hate the reaction from surfeit of pleasure! Horrible! An animal civilization! Except that animals are not cursed with banal fancies that dress these things in false names and faded sentimentalities!

The door opened and closed quickly. Mr. Brown was back, bringing fresh logs for the fire. He put them down and stood before the blaze, rubbing his hands and waiting, as he did every night, Gilchrist's invitation to light a pipe. Mr.

Brown was rather afraid of the strange young man now; also he was very punctillious. But no invitation came. Gilchrist replied absently and in monosyllables to conversational leaders, drumming on the floor with nervous fingers. So Mr. Brown decided again that he wasn't wanted and began edging towards the sleeping room door. "Reckon I'll be turning into bed," he suggested sadly.

Gilchrist came to earth at once, ashamed of his inhospitality. "Oh, say Alec—don't go yet. I'm being damnably unsociable, I'm afraid. Don't know what's wrong with me to-day. Light up, won't you, and let's chat a bit!"

Mr. Brown wiped his nose with his sleeve; he was very sensitive. "Not in the least, Mister Sturtevant, not in the least," he protested. "Reckon you just haven't any conversation to-night whatsoever. Sometimes I'm like that myself—don't seem to have any conversation." He paused for a word as though he were making a speech. "—whatsoever," he added for emphasis. "I calculated on going to bed early to-night anyhow—sorter sleepy—reckon I'll be saying good-night—going to turn into bed."

He was forgotten as soon as gone and Gilchrist resumed his fire-gazing. Yes, it was an animal thing—love! Yet there was biology; love was important at least from that standpoint—it

meant reproduction. Maintenance of the species, the family, the individual. Couldn't be altogether dross—it was too important!

But why—to everything, why? Maintenance of the species! That was begging the question with a platitude. Why should the species be maintained after all? Why be exploited morally by a principle of biology? For thousands of years this particular species had been continued and was no better to-day than in the beginning. When in all history were selfishness, deceit, lust, hate, unhappiness, as widespread as to-day!

A smoky ember snapped from the fire and fell on the rug. He kicked at it and rose impatiently to brush it onto the hearth—he mustn't be interrupted! But why? Why not be interrupted since he had come to his conclusion? Why did he feel that this was not the conclusion, that he must reach another? He wondered if his thoughts were like a motion picture story, sure to end well and, by that token, incomplete until the happy ending had been attained. In the back of his mind, he confessed, was a vague belief that he would settle this business against the animal idea. Again—why? Eternally, why? Thus far his logical processes had been unimpeachable; there was no real case for “carrying on,” for ideals or progress, since all development was towards a larger and larger ugliness. Instance the world



panorama now at the close of the Greatest War—hateful! Could it be that in his very desire to reach a good ending without regard for the logic of it, there was a clue—that Progress, in spite of its hideous manifestations, served the Purpose of some dim God whose plan he did not comprehend? Even so—again the why! Even if development followed some unfathomable Purpose, even if there were an Ultimate Good towards which the world moved, why should he serve it? What would it mean to him? In the last analysis why should he serve any ends beyond his own animal lusts and animal needs?

Ugliness? Bernard Shaw would say “how do you know what is ugly and what is not?” But that was outrageous; he leaped to cross swords with this intellectual acrobat whose denial of all that was dramatic or emotional had always irritated him. “I don’t know *how* I know what is ugly and what is beautiful, but all your cleverness can’t dodge the fact that I *do* know.” He was sure of that!

And was there not an explanation, after all? Ah, here was the beginning of a certain wisdom! He *did* know what was ugly and what beautiful—not by any reasoning process, not because there were any immutable laws that determined these things, not even because the things were fixed and static—but through medium of a certain

quality in his nature. A sixth sense! That was vague, of course, and incorrect too, for this thing wasn't really a sense! Yet, positively, there *was* a faculty in the human makeup that gave the power of discrimination. Not only the power but the habit—and, more important still, the inclination! Through such a faculty he knew that old Hurricane with its rocky head buried in snow as he had seen it at sunrise on the trail to Lewis was beautiful—and that the street where John McLanahan lived in Bloody Hollow was ugly!

Ah, he was arriving now—this very faculty was driving him to arrive, determining him to do it! A Sixth Sense! It was a thing that might tell him everything. It told him that Hugh's way was better than Arthur's, that the Senator's Armageddon was worth fighting for even if never attained, that Pierre Guibert's love of his fellow-man was the most blessed thing in life, that there was something clean in the physical relationships of men and women! As far as he could look it cleared the way! It proclaimed the Purpose at work in the universe and the unfathomable wisdom of that Purpose; it explained those men who had rather serve than be served! A Purpose! God? Certainly not a white-haired old man, but the God that was in some strange way behind this Sixth Sense, the God that existed in the indomitable spirits of men, the God that

made knight-errants and led them ever towards a proximate goal without betraying the final one, the God that shone in Senator Calhoun's face when he spoke dimly of Armageddon! Yes, the God that was driving himself, Gilchrist Sturtevant, now to lift once more against the world wreck His "banner of forlorn defense" and, if nothing better offered, "to tilt at windmills under a wild sky!" That God he confessed!

He stood up slowly. At this moment he felt ashamed of everything he had ever done—of his self-serving triumphs, of his self-centered failures. He tiptoed into the sleeping room and stood over his snoring guest. Poor old chap! Rotten outing for him!

"Alec—Alec!" he called, shaking the sleeper gently.

"Reckon you better take my gun," said Mr. Brown, dreaming.

"Awfully sorry to wake you up, Alec. Say, we'll have to be going back to town in the morning. Get up at five to catch that eleven o'clock from Essex."

Mr. Brown sat up in bed, fantastic in a purple nightshirt. "Huh? How's that? Thought you wasn't going 'til Saturday!"

"Hope you don't mind. It's my, er—sixth sense."

"Huh? How's that?"

"I mean—important letter. Got it at Lewis to-day."

"All right." Mr. Brown was sliding back under his blanket. "It ain't five yet, is it, Mister Sturtevant?"

"You win," Gilchrist smiled, "it's only eleven the night before. I didn't mean to wake you up."



## Chapter Twenty

WITH early spring comes a decline and fall of the *débutante* season. Dowager mothers, weary of careful and constant campaigning for their daughters, relax or begin campaigns in their own behalves. By March it is the gown or goings of "Mrs." that crowd the social columns; "Miss" is out of fashion, and the *Tattler* turns from talk of buds to more absorbing tales of *divorcées*. Generally, at this time, Colonel Dorsey, who is wealthy, middle-aged and single, makes his annual decision that after all it will be better to wed a dowager than a *débutante*, and almost overnight the personnel of his famous dinner parties shifts a generation. (The Colonel's decisions are things of importance because he is a real estate man and in Washington the topmost rungs of the social ladder are strongly held by diplomats and "real estaters.")

The *débutantes* of this year (which was the Stella Chambers or neo-Alice Deering year) were flappers to the core, and under cover of the oblivion that succeeded their season they now began a more serious application of the flapperdoms

they had learned. The underlying principle of flapperage was that there are no rules except the rule of social place. One must not swear, for instance, at large dinners but at small affairs it is quite important to do so. An intoxicated man, if he is well-bred about it, is an ornament that lends distinction to the wearer, and if the "wearer" herself be mildly afflicted with the same malady the distinction accumulates. Proposals of marriage are excellent feathers for the hat but are seriously regarded only by the middle classes. Nothing in this or the next world, or in the secret places of one's own or one's neighbor's heart, may be held inviolate against discussion with other flappers at luncheons. Men of heart or character or achievement are invariably tiresome, and except at dinners where they can be used to sit beside the chaperone, are generally taboo. A flapper who happens to be burdened with old-school parents may not, perhaps, go to the theater unchaperoned; but, on the other hand, when the chaperone has been trotted off to bed later, there is no reason why one may not be roundly kissed over the business of cake and milk in the kitchen if the young man is nice about it. Kissing is of two kinds—kissing for kissing's sake and kissing for a purpose. "When a man is simply too boring," Stella explained at luncheon, "I let him kiss me and send him home."

Two of the débutantes had failed as flappers. Myrtis Bayne had tried but she was fundamentally too timid and incidentally too dull-witted. Cecilia Lee had tried too but only Hugh seemed to understand this and he was merely amused. "A landmark, Cess," he declared, "that's what you are. You can't flap an inch and every man in town's in love with you. You watch—this flapper business is being worked to death—next year we'll have a new horror called the 'shy, sweet girl.' "

During Lent when there was little else to do, Myrtis, following a line of least resistance and most allurements, began to fancy herself in love. Gossip had her engaged to Blaine Todd before Dowager Bayne had ever known enough of it to forestall the *Tattler*. It was annoying; the dowager had earned a rest and was spending it in a discreet affair with Colonel Dorsey when the paragraph appeared and Myrtis simpered confirmation.

There was much to be said for Blaine but the dowager would neither say it nor hear it. He was indisputably the best dancer and probably the best looking man in the younger set. He was a good conversationalist and played golf better than any other member of the Chevy Chase Club. With these four qualifications alone he could have gone far in Washington. But the thing that had

placed him in a class above his fellows and carried him to within striking distance of an eminence that would have entitled him to the Bayne daughter and the Bayne millions, was a certain genius for conforming. He wore just the right clothes at just the right time, was cynical or enthusiastic about just the proper things, knew when to be bored, when to be rude, whom to snub, whom to be afraid of, what girls to think attractive, when to be seen with soiled linen, when to be immaculate, what subjects to be "up" on and what ones to know nothing about. It was perfect; so faithful he was to these vaguely defined but instantly recognized standards, so free of any hint of individuality, that many a dowager of less importance than Mrs. Bayne would have welcomed him to the family bosom and coffers.

But Dowager Bayne's snobbery was too whole-souled to be encompassed even by genius like Blaine's. As soon as the *Tattler* paragraph appeared she moved boldly to close what seemed so bright a social and financial avenue to the young man. She knew her daughter well; no need to whisk her off to Hot Springs or Europe and hold Blaine up to private scorn as a fortune hunter! As soon as she had determined that he would not do (and he most assuredly would not for he was too "local"), she took up the matter directly with Myrtis, hinted at loss of social position,



spoke frankly of possibilities in the diplomatic corps, sneered cautiously at Blaine, and warned of what their world would say. And Myrtis, loyal to the only law she knew which was the law of "carrying on" socially, cried a little and dropped him. Her sentiment had been quite sincere and quite weak. As for Blaine, whose only error lay in being an American and whose spirit was indomitable, he soon re-oriented himself and was seen everywhere with Millicent Bronson whose wealth and rank easily rivalled the Baynes'.

"I suppose that young man expected me to support Myrtis and himself," Mrs. Bayne told Mrs. Deering, "I wouldn't think of Myrtis marrying anyone but an Englishman."

Everyone was learning something. Except Cecilia. The "most popular débutante" was as much a débutante in April as she had been in November. Since nothing made an impression nothing could grow tiresome. The old thrills were never old to Cecilia, and experience neither deepened nor sophisticated her. The taste for excitement which dominated her was as refined as it was insatiable; her single passion remained, as before, a negative one—to keep herself safe from whatever was boring, or ugly, or hard, or fundamental. The same quality that made it so nearly impossible for her to witness Anne's pain on the night of the accident provoked her to send

Arthur from the house one night when he grew demonstrative over cake and milk in the kitchen. Both things were ugly to her—and both were, in a sense, fundamental.

Arthur was sentimental flotsam now. He had drifted as easily from Anne to Cecilia as from Alice to Anne. He was neither flirt nor lover but merely creature of his own fancies and senses. Things of the senses stimulated his fancy and things of fancy roused his senses. The positive fear he invoked in Cecilia quickly ended that romance and within the month gossip at débutante luncheons had him proposing marriage to two other girls in a single week. This came about quite naturally, from Arthur's point of view. The first girl was dark-eyed, red-lipped and olive-skinned, with a physical magnetism that made other people seem smaller and paler when she entered a room. Sensitive for a long time to the physical qualities of this girl and still bitter with Cecilia's rebuff, Arthur made warm and reckless love to her one afternoon in the library of her home. She responded tempestuously to his kisses, but for the word-magic he breathed along with them she gave only the most trite and trivial return. In an hour he wearied of her warmth and was shocked at her stupidity. When he left it was for her, to all appearances, a parting of lovers, but for him it was retreat. Three nights

later, behind the bend in the stairway at Raushers, with a distant violin moaning the "*Chanson d'Indu*," he was inspired to confide this story to another girl whose beauty was delicate and whose imagination and eloquence rivalled his own. Sympathetically she held his hand and soothed him with dainty speech until his story was forgotten in a new story he told her. "Don't let me kiss you," he begged, "and don't let me speak of love. 'One word too often is profaned that I profane it now.' " They parted at supper with eye-messages that bespoke complete understanding. The next morning he hated her and wanted the red-lipped girl again. The net result of the week was a poem he wrote and mailed to the red lips—

Yesterday,  
Because the scent of some wild rose  
Was in your hair, and on your lips a magic word,  
The heavens blazed for me,  
Lighting new worlds rimmed with stars and sweet as  
    dawn;  
Fancy woke, and winged a wondrous flight  
Through skies heroic-tinted, ringed with high romance;  
Music broke swooning into my heart,  
Flooding dark, long soundless deeps  
With gallant song.

To-day,  
Because the fragrance of your hair  
Is on my coat, and on your lips the magic word  
Is crushed with my poor kiss,  
I, all mad, have hurled me deep  
Into the green and blue of dancing seas you haunt,

Upon whose coral floors I cannot breathe—  
I had forgot, mermaid, I cannot breathe!  
Because you knew a magic word  
And I was drunk with fragrance in your hair,  
Here in your sea caves I pant—  
Drowning!

Since she could not in the least understand the verses, the red-lipped girl showed them to her bosom friend—who chanced to be the girl of the stairway. This was proper, for, if Arthur had analyzed his effort, he must have confessed that the “magic word” had been on the lips of the second girl and the “scent of some wild rose” in the hair of the first.

But as for proposing marriage, luncheon gossip did Arthur an injustice. Such a thing never occurred to him; it was inartistic and smacked of the commercial and businesslike. In fact he associated marriage so unfailingly with the financial capacity to conduct an establishment that at this time especially it would have been remote from his mind. The common stock in Western Leasing which he and Gilchrist had acquired through the deal with Mr. Cox had depreciated to a fourth its par value and was still falling in spite of the fact that the preferred stock which the organizers held remained well above par.

Gilchrist had withdrawn altogether from Arthur's world. Most of his time was given to the Industrial Relations Commission on whose



board he was serving without pay pending Senate action on his nomination. Convinced that confirmation was impossible so long as the White interests opposed, he had gone to see George White the day he returned from the mountains, only to be informed that the coal baron was out of town. A week later he called again and was informed that Mr. White "could see no basis or need for an interview." Whereupon Gilchrist had determined that not "all the king's horses and all the king's men" should prevent an ultimate interview. For three weeks he stuck to his work on the Commission and then called again. To his surprise he was received at once.

"I'm sorry if I intrude, Mr. White," he began, "but I want this Commissionership—want it so badly I'm willing to come here and ask why you won't let me have it."

Mr. White's stare was perfectly unintelligible, as usual. "Have no sympathy with the Commission," he grunted, "was opposed to it from the beginning."

"You mean you were opposed to me?"

A remote annoyance colored the stare. "You guessed it young man, I *was* opposed to you and I am *still* opposed to you."

"Well, I have come to ask why."

The stare was angry now. "All right, I'll answer that. I believe you're running with a lot

of damn fools who want to ruin the business and disrupt the government of this country. I not only believe it, I *know* it, because I've got the goods on you!"

Gilchrist felt his own temper rising. "Got the goods!" he repeated hotly, "Come now, Mr. White, accuse me of something. Don't talk of getting the goods as if this were a criminal proceeding. What are you implying?"

"That you're hand in glove with McLanahan and that communist bunch at the mines—that's what I'm implying." The vein on Mr. White's left temple was pumping hard, "I'm implying that all the time you were running for Congress—and talking straight in public—you were thick as hell with McLanahan. You went to see him in Bloody Hollow and then had him here to see you—I know it because my man watched you. I'm implying that I'll stand for liberals, progressives, labor sympathizers and all the rest of this modern balderdash, but I won't put up with a damned bolshevist!"

The younger man was too surprised to be angry now. He forced himself to speak quietly.

"Look here, Mr. White, I don't want your support on any misunderstanding of my position and I don't want you to oppose me on any misunderstanding either. We disagree pretty thoroughly, I know, on many things—from labor

to the League. But we both stand for law and order and we both happen to want the Democratic Party in power. If this doesn't entitle me to your support, then don't give it to me. As for this ridiculous bolshevist business, my whole relationship with McLanahan is a personal one and I have no more sympathy or association with his principles than you have. I *did* go to his house and he *has* called on me here when he came over to see his daughter. He's a friend of a very interesting foreigner I——" Realizing that the story of Pierre would be an involved one, he cut himself short. "—you'll have to take my word for it that his doctrines are as objectionable to me as they are to you. Do you believe that?"

Mr. White seemed scarcely to have heard.

"And what's more," he said, as though Gilchrist had never spoken, "I don't care hen's teeth about a man that gets women to do his work for him. I promised Deering's daughter and John Hampton I'd talk to you—but their coming in here didn't help much—you can see that."

At this Gilchrist began to believe either himself or the other totally mad——

"Deering's daughter? What did you say?"

"Said it didn't help much." Mr. White was plainly sceptical of his stupefaction.

"You mean—Miss Deering came here—and talked to you about this?"

Mr. White grunted and eyed the younger man for a few moments in a detached, impersonal way. Then he looked at his watch and said, almost pleasantly,

“Got an engagement now. Must excuse me. Barrel of sense that girl has. Money too. Better let her run your politics.” He pushed the button on his desk and a secretary opened the outer door.

Gilchrist was too bewildered now to make further inquiry or protest. He walked dazedly to the door as two United States Senators were ushered in. In the hallway the secretary came running after him. “You left your gloves, sir.”



## *Chapter Twenty-one*

**A**LICE DEERING again! Into every corner of his life Fate seemed determined to thrust her! The only tangible idea in his brain as he left the White Company offices was that he must see her and have her explanation. It was no longer of importance whether Mr. White gave his support or not—nothing mattered except the explanation!

At the Deering residence he learned that she had gone to a class and was to stop by the hospital afterwards to visit Anne McLanahan. Well, he would go to the hospital! He would not stop until he found her!

He set out rapidly down Twentieth Street. Destiny ran to meet him; three blocks ahead he recognized Alice approaching with long, resolute strides he knew well. A straight-lined cloak she wore was loosened so that when the wind blew it aside its dark red lining caught the eye. He grew suddenly afraid of the excitement creeping through him. They had not met since the interview before his trip to the mountains; the memory of "cruel kisses" stung him now with a dangerous

sort of delight. Two blocks away—and he knew that he was trembling, actually shaking, with a tortured composite of desire, anticipation, and fear. He thought wildly of turning aside down the next corner, then ached with apprehension of really doing it and missing her. One block away, and he was resolutely recalling all the ruin and disillusion she meant, frantically fixing his determination to know what new callousness or vanity had brought her to visit White. Half a block now—she had recognized him and halted. He saw her pass a hand swiftly across her forehead—perplexity or to rearrange her hair against the March wind? An altogether absurd fancy seized him; that gesture recalled a picture he and Hugh had seen in a French gallery, a woman in bright armour with hand raised to close a visor that glittered in the sun. A battle figure! Joan of Arc!

Burlesque, surely! But he remembered the gesture.

“Hello, this is queer,” she hailed first, “I was just thinking of you.”

He caught the slight strain in her voice and was relieved to find himself quite calm. “I’ve just come from your house,” he said, “I had a talk with George White to-day.”

“George White!” she exclaimed, and blushed.

“I’ll walk along with you?”

She nodded uneasily. “I talked to him myself

the other day," she said. "He's an old friend of dad's. I—we spoke of you."

He made no reply. She was thinking rapidly, altogether unprepared for this situation. What if he learned the truth—all of it from the first maneuver with Mr. White at her mother's dinner to the recent one? Would he believe in her as good angel or as conspirator either? It was impossible; she loathed both rôles! He must never know the truth, any of it! It would never do to have his gratitude now!

Yet she could see that Mr. White had told him of her visit.

"I wanted to talk with him about Anne." Confidence returned now that she began to know her course, "she must be kept away from her father's influence. He seemed to have you all mixed up with McLanahan and the people down there. Which I thought rather absurd."

"Of course," said Gilchrist.

The faint color of truth in her explanation enabled her to be convincing——

"It was no concern of mine," she continued coldly, "but when he spoke of it I told him I thought you had enough intelligence to see through a lot of emotional creatures like those."

They walked on in silence—deliberate on her part. To Gilchrist there seemed nothing to say, pitifully nothing. Could he not sense her dislike!

Or total indifference anyhow! And for his own part, except for a certain tumult of his blood, what could such a woman mean to him! Her lips were dry with wind-burn—he had kissed them, but that was a thing he had sworn to forget—he must forget—if they were ever to be humanly friends! Friends? Why should they be friends?

“Has he withdrawn his opposition?” The strain in her voice escaped him this time.

“Quite the contrary,” he said carelessly, “He has a new grudge now—I send women to him to do my lobbying.”

“What women? Oh!” It was Alice’s turn now to feel tragedy. Then she had made a mess of it! A complete mess! Something told her that the thing she had done at her mother’s dinner in October would never be undone!

“Well—that’s that,” she said bravely, almost under her breath.

He thought her indifferent.

“Suppose it’s about time to take your advice and leave my fellow-man alone,” he said, “after all, one must make a living.”

She was silent. “However, I shall give myself the satisfaction of losing this fight at the finish—not in the middle. After that, I’ll try something else—any fool can make a living.” She should not gloat over him!

“Surely,” she agreed, to his surprise, “hold on



to your Western Leasing stock, Gilchrist. Dad has some and he says it will be paying splendidly in six months—it's going back up."

"How did you know I——" he began.

"Arthur told me—he has some too, hasn't he?"

"Well, I sold mine at the market last week. I'm not being paid for my present services to humanity on the Commission, you know."

"Sold it! Oh, Gilchrist—you sold it?"

"Your father may be right—but as a matter of fact I had to have the money."

Remorse was not in Alice but she could hate a bad job. And this one was bad—as bad as the other. She had made a mess of both! And she had been so sure! Good angel indeed! She was a fool, an incompetent fool, rushing in where angels wouldn't tread! Now she loathed the conceit in herself that had made her believe from the very beginning in her power to control this man's destiny. How little she knew after all, how pitifully equipped for the things she had attempted! Anger at herself whipped the blood to her cheeks and trembled on her lips. She would tell him everything and be done with it all—let him hate her as he never had before!

She turned passionately to him but something in the thin set of his jaw halted her. What humiliation for him if she told all! His looks belied the cynicism of his speech; after all he was still

resolute, still a believer! If her meddlesomeness had lost him his inheritance and threatened to lose him his career, it should at least not lose him his soul! Let him go on to his "defeat at the finish"—he should keep that soul—and her heart too if he could care! If he could care! That must wait!

"Anne's going to get well," she said, "did you hear? Dr. Morton says the operation is a complete success. I took Mrs. Durand to see her yesterday and she invited Anne to Essex as soon as she's able to make the trip. She's a ripping little girl, I say."

"Why do you like her?" In the question there was criticism not of Anne but of Alice.

She pondered. "I suppose it's because she's everything I'm not," she said humbly, "for instance, she believes in things."

"While you——?" He was interested, against his will.

"I? Oh, I'm only beginning to *want* to believe."

"In what?"

"I don't know." She spoke so earnestly he turned to stare at her. Again he began to think that after all he knew very little of the real Alice. Queer he had never troubled to search for her in all their unhappy acquaintance!

"Anything will do, I suppose," she continued lightly. "Anne believes in the whole world and

particularly in Hugh. Hugh believes in his own imagination. Cess believes in the little part of the world she knows about, providing the rest of the world is kept out. Of course I belong to that little part too but I can't believe in it. Even Arthur believes—in something he thinks of as romance. Lots of people believe in God. And you and Senator Calhoun believe in ideas, don't you? Gilchrist, it's hard for a woman to believe in ideas—they're too abstract."

Inexplicable woman! He decided that he did not know her at all. And once he had thought he knew her bitterly well! Now, for the first time in his life he began to believe her splendidly worth knowing. If he could forget the other thing, control this tumult of his senses, what a friend and inspiration he might make of her!

They had reached her door.

"I'd like to believe—in you, Alice," he said slowly as if he had just reached that conclusion and was surprised at it.

"Don't," she smiled, and gave him the tips of her fingers and was gone.

But when the door had closed on him she stood before the tall mirror in the hallway and spoke earnestly to her reflection there.

"Liar! Liar! You *do* believe. You believe in Gilchrist Sturtevant. And in yourself!"

Then, to her own amazement, she wept.

## *Chapter Twenty-two*

C HERRY blossom time in Washington. The trim foreign trees line Potomac Basin with delicate color suggestive half of austere winter passed and half of riotous spring to come. The drama of retreating cold and advancing warmth, the stir of old memories and coming events, are in these cherry blooms of early spring. At night the pink is ghostly; the placid Basin is ringed with white and over its eastern rim, bathed in light from invisible sources, the Monument towers like a mighty constellation—an exalted finger pointing heavenward.

On the basin's edge are a man and a woman, small pieces in black and white lodged against the cosmic panorama, impudently assailing the eternal riddles.

“To scorn the half-gods,” the man was saying, “that’s the key to it all. To accept from life only the keenest things and to give in return the best of one’s self, to strike high and win or lose splendidly, to refuse all compromise with what is mediocre or humdrum—it may sound absurd, Alice,



but, in our own ways, I believe both of us have tried to do this from the very beginning.”

“And failed?” The woman’s voice was low.

“Not yet, I think. It’s only that we have been too lazy or too ignorant to make of life what we’ve pretended it was. I’ve been reading a book of Hugh’s called “Peer Gynt.” Peer pretended a certain Troll-King’s daughter was beautiful because he wanted something beautiful and she was what he got.”

“Wasn’t she?”

“Homely beyond words. Or her people were—I forget. Anyhow there were beautiful things to be found if he had looked for them and insisted on them and refused anything else.”

In the light breeze that came in to them from the water was a faint smell of the sea. The searchlight left the Monument to sweep the skies and return.

“I think it was harder for you than for me,” he continued, “more than almost anyone you wanted your life to be keen—and tried to make it like that in an atmosphere where nothing is keen or full or complete. You failed, of course, but you made believe, you stuck to that atmosphere, and pretended it was all you wanted it to be.”

She forgave him the egotism that now left himself out of the analysis. What did it matter!

This breeze—that light on the Monument! This man!

“—You played the only game in sight. Played it harder than anyone else—you would always do that, wouldn't you!”

“It was a great game, while it lasted.”

A motor-car fled by on the road across the Basin, its yellow eyes intent.

“My candle burns at both ends,  
It will not last the night,  
But oh my foes and ah my friends—  
It gives a lovely light!”

she quoted lazily. “Do you know that, Gilchrist?”

“No. It was a rotten game just because it wouldn't last. Youth doesn't exist in the quantities your world demands. Excitement is a drug and the effect is less with each taking until finally there's no more power in it. A little more and you would be old. Play, play, play—until you're exhausted for good, until there's neither laughter nor tears left and your soul is too anemic for hate or love or any sort of keenness.”

“But what would you suggest?”

“It's trite to say it, but life really must include along with the measure of play a measure of work, a measure of effort, of purpose. The world is so big outside the little corner in which a society woman lives.”

“But where are these ‘measures’ kept, Gil-

christ?" Alice spoke impatiently; she suspected him of generalizing. And this maddening avoidance of the personal—was their association always to be only mental! He was a man of wood, with wooden speeches and a wooden heart! Well, let him have his own way, in his own time! Some cherry blossoms fell into her lap from the tree overhead.

"That isn't so important," he said, "you might become a Joan of Arc. Or domestic—an 'Alice-sit-by-the-fire.' Or an interior decorator."

"Heavens! Not an interior decorator, old top. Every girl who ever wanted to do anything went in for interior decorating, I think."

"It's the values you give things—not what you do. You're educated all wrong. In these finishing schools every ideal is a fashionable one and knowledge is only a thing to show. Real education puts character level with knowledge and makes knowledge its own justification, not a ribbon on the sleeve. From real education comes a pleasure in ideas and an enthusiasm for self-expression and service."

He was too deep in his theory to be aware that they were sitting very close together. But when his hand dropped nervously and by accident found hers beneath it his blood suddenly tingled like mad at the touch and he pressed the hand convulsively. In an instant he had forgotten his

theme and was trembling as he remembered trembling a month before when he saw her coming to meet him along Twentieth Street. "The grief of cruel kisses!" He released her hand—that sort of thing must never happen again if his respect for their new relationship was to stand!

"I think it will have to be Joan of Arc," she was saying lightly, "I loathe interior decorators. And I'm stupid by a fire."

Joan of Arc! He remembered the woman in armour with hand raised to a gleaming visor—and Alice coming to meet him down the street!

"Another age, other circumstances, and Alice Deering might have been a Maid of Orleans," he said and instantly wished the words unsaid; they were too sentimental and unqualified.

"There are other things, my dear," she replied, a little self-conscious as "Joan," "now that you've settled the society girl. What about the problem of the ambitious young man and his well-known shortcomings with the other sex? Speak of that—for the growing mind!"

"Why I——"

"I can do it myself—wait! It's the same thing. Play! If women of my class need to play less, men of your type need to play more, don't you think? The worth-while men who do the big things—most of them never learn how to play. And it's quite important—they should learn, I



don't know why but I'm sure of it. The men who can play—really delightfully—are generally the worthless ones. The egotism of it! You 'great young men'—they call you that, Gilchrist—can't you ever be children, couldn't you be foolish now and then? Some of you can anyhow. Did you ever see William Gibbs McAdoo and his wife at a dance romping like infants together? And Hugh—he's ideal, I think. Calls it being a Gascon and it doesn't make him a bit less notable, does it!"

"Not a bit," said Gilchrist loyally, "Hugh's a wonder."

He was silent. No, she decided, whether he agreed or not, Gilchrist could never, never learn to play! Well, she preferred him as he was! For once she felt infinitely older than this earnest, passionate man at her side.

Mist over the water divided the Monument from its base and seemed to push it further heavenward. She wished that Gilchrist would hold her hand. How like the two of them, she thought, that in this panorama of splendor and night he should think only of "abstractions" and she only of him and of herself!

"Help me up—we must go," she whispered. He scrambled to his feet and she held both arms to him, starlight in her face, dew on her lips. He lifted her courteously, released her neither too

quickly nor too slowly. At elbow length these two cosmic and not a little comic actors walked back to Alice's red Stutz parked by the road under the ghostly cherry blossoms.

## Chapter Twenty-three

THE Irish," said Hugh, fumbling in his pockets for a match, "were never meant to be a nation. The good Lord——"

"There you go," Alice interrupted, "the third time in half an hour you've been spokesman for the 'good Lord'. Allah is mighty and Hugh Cothran is his prophet!"

"But he hadn't finished, Miss Deering," Anne protested from her invalid chair.

"And there *you* go, little Victorian. Didn't I tell you not to call me Miss Deering?"

"The good Lord," Hugh resumed, attempting rings with his cigar smoke and failing, "didn't mean either the Irish or the Jews to be a nation. They are meant for salt and pepper to be sprinkled everywhere. Irish for snap and fight; Jews for imagination and vitality. But a nation all salt or all pepper—impossible!"

"Right, Sir Oracle," said Alice and put her feet on the banister. "There are too many nations already—that's the whole trouble. But dashes of salt and pepper over the international chop

suey from your good Lord's crullers—that's splendid! I'm an Internationalist."

"Oh—you're an internationalist?" Hugh made a mental note, and smiled.

"Gilchrist is one, too." Anne ventured, pressing Hugh's hand which held hers. Unconsciously she had put Hugh's two and two together, and Alice went a faint red under cover of the darkness which had settled over the Durand veranda within the half-hour.

"He may be an anarchist if the all-wise Senate didn't confirm his nomination to-day," she asserted stoutly, "it's the last chance."

It was late in June. A modest breeze, slightly intoxicated with the scent of the mountains, sauntered across the banister. Immediately, as if blown of the same breeze, a tip of the moon appeared over the dark range in the east.

"Ah, speaking of internationalists," said Hugh, blowing lazy smoke at the newcomer, "enter the international gallery-player!"

"He thinks the stars are more splendid than the moon," Anne explained to Alice, "he says the moon is undignified but the stars——"

"——Perfect rot!" said Alice. "Hugh's a sentimentalist, whatever that is. Don't you believe him. Did you walk some to-day?"

"Twice the length of the piazza by myself. And I could have done it again if Hugh——"



“When I come up next week you’ll be playing hop scotch on both feet,” said Hugh, “Dr. Morton says you can walk as far as the next man in a month and that’s pretty darned far.”

The lights of the Durand Hudson swept the veranda as the car rounded the corner with Henry and his father.

“Whatter y’know, Hugh,” Henry called, running up the steps, “McAdoo leads on the thirty-second—four twenty-one to three ninety-one for Cox to a hundred and seventy-six for Palmer. That’s the last wire down at the village!”

“Clap me on the back,” said Hugh, “it must be you’re a McAdoo man!”

“You said it!” Henry clapped him with such vigor that Anne winced, “So is Dad and he’s all excited about it!”

Mr. Durand was undoubtedly excited. “We wired good wishes to Gilchrist and the Senator but I doubt if telegrams are delivered on the convention floor,” he explained hurriedly, fanning himself with an afternoon paper. “They must have chafed at being obliged to vote for Palmer throughout—vicious, this unit rule. The break should come soon now.”

“If the President sends a message——” Alice mused.

“He won’t.” The old statesman was unusually communicative. “It’s his Presbyterianism—I be-

lieve he feels himself in the care of predestination. Justified too—Destiny nominated him at Baltimore in 1912 after he had ordered McCoombs to withdraw his name. Same thing in 1916—after Hughes had been President for a night. Destiny placed him at the helm in the greatest of wars, and he's probably waiting quietly now for Destiny to accomplish his League of Nations through a Democratic platform and candidate energetically loyal to it."

"Dinner," said Mrs. Durand, at the veranda door. "Are you all at politics again?"

"All except Anne, Aunt Jane," Alice was smiling at the invalid's lost expression, "she's looking at the moon. She says Hugh thinks the stars——"

"Oh shut up, Buccaneer," said Hugh, "take your feet down and come to dinner—didn't you hear Mrs. Durand?"

Henry gave a long whistle. "Did you see this, Hugh?" he said, reading the paper. "Too bad but I must say I thought it would happen."

"What is it?"

"Rotten politicians, Senator Calhoun and Gilchrist!" He shook his head sagely.

"Well, what is it?"

"Listen—from Washington. 'The Senate to-day refused to confirm the nomination of Gilchrist B. Sturtevant for the vacancy on the Industrial Relations Commission. Inasmuch as this

is the third time his nomination has been rejected it was announced from the White House that the President will send a new name to the Senate at an early date.' ”

Mrs. Durand was essentially domestic. To her this announcement, although important, held no more than an equal place with the fact that dinner was waiting. “Too bad” she murmured, “poor Gilchrist seems unfortunate in these things.”

“He’s unfortunate in the enemies he makes,” said Mr. Durand.

“He’s unfortunately honest,” Hugh said bitterly, aching for his friend.

Alice’s feet had slipped from the banister and she was holding one hand tightly with the other in her lap.

“Well, that’s that!” she said casually. Henry thought her callous. And Anne wondered if she were.

After dinner the party played a not very intellectual game called “adjectives”—it was a game they had always played at the Durands as long as Alice could remember. When it came her turn to guess the authors of the respective adjectives applied to herself she guessed that it was Mr. Durand who had called her “sympathetic,” Mrs. Durand who had called her “temperamental,” Anne “entertaining,” Henry “impossible” and Hugh “quite possible.” She won the prize, which

was the right to demand a “stunt” from any other in the party. The “stunt” she asked was a song from Anne.

Anne liked being asked to sing. Her voice was clear and sweet and not spoiled with any sort of training. While the others listened from the veranda and Mrs. Durand played the accompaniment, she sang the song Hugh liked best—an adaptation of Walter de la Mare’s poem——

“The burning fire shakes in the night,  
On high her silver candles gleam,  
With far-flung arms enflamed with light  
The trees are lost in dream.

Come in thy beauty, ’tis my love,  
Lost in far-wandering desire,  
Hath in the darkling deep above,  
Set stars and kindled fire.”

And Alice, who could never carry or comprehend a tune, loved it. Loved it for the words, for the last lines. Hours later, long after Hugh had left for his train back to Washington and the others had gone to bed, she sat remembering those lines and loving them. The moon was gone but the stars and the breeze remained—she sat on the banister and reached passionate, awkward arms to them.

“ — lost in far-wandering desire,  
Hath in the darkling deep above,  
Set stars and kindled fire.”



“If I can have done that,” she said, and must have been addressing Mrs. Durand’s collie dozing beside her for no one else was present, “nothing else matters—dear!”

The collie thumped his tail on the floor and sniffed. She shook her head in sudden exasperation.

“Wooden man,” she said, “you perfectly wooden man!”

## *Chapter Twenty-four*

GILCHRIST and Senator Calhoun were decidedly "McAdoo men" and as such had their full share of the excitement at San Francisco. When McAdoo's name was placed in nomination Gilchrist exchanged hot words and finally blows with the holder of his state banner before he was permitted to swing it into the McAdoo parade coursing the convention floor. On another occasion at Senator Calhoun's hotel when an intoxicated and six-foot Cox man applied an unpardonable epithet to Woodrow Wilson, the Senator promptly broke his cane over the man's shoulder and was at point of receiving the full force of his towering victim's wrath when Gilchrist, entering the lobby at just the right moment, leaped and crawled over intervening shoulders to drop his own six-footedness between the "little giant" and his opponent. "I fight Senator Calhoun's battles," he shouted dramatically, and the Cox man, dazed at the rapid succession of events and impressed at learning his cyclonic if diminutive assailant was the famed Senatorial

orator and pet, mumbled some incoherent defiance and made off through the crowd.

Both men believed that the fate of Wilson and of the League hung upon the nomination of McAdoo. Just before the stampede that nominated Governor Cox, Gilchrist received telegraphic report of the Senate's final refusal to confirm his own nomination. The two blows came almost simultaneously therefore and at first his disappointment was too shocking to be articulate. He dared not formulate it even to himself, fearing that vast decadence of spirit that had come over him in Washington in the winter. He could not face the McAdoo "post-mortems" they would be holding at the hotel, and passed the greater part of the night walking the streets—to return at early morning as from Gethsemane itself with pale cheeks and bitter eyes, wondering if there would be a third party. He was positive that no promise remained in either of the old parties.

In the afternoon he and the Senator began the long trip east, with scornful memories of the enthusiasm with which they had arrived in San Francisco ten days before. The Senator was leaving at Chicago, not to return to Washington until late in the summer. Gilchrist rather looked forward to Chicago for this reason; he wanted to be alone. The only human being he cared to see just now was Hugh. Hugh would laugh at

him, bring him down to earth, fill him with the pleasant littlenesses of life. He wanted to be laughed at, needed to be! He wired Hugh the time of his arrival at Washington.

But Hugh would not have laughed—not at this moment. Gilchrist's telegram reached him at a cross-roads in his own life. He could never have been more serious than on this particular morning as he threaded in and out of the early morning crowds on Pennsylvania Avenue. He loved crowds. The eternal flow of new faces fascinated him. Also he could think well in them, better than anywhere else, and just now he wanted badly to think something out. He must orient himself—and he chose Pennsylvania Avenue. Of course he never really thought anything out; he merely made decisions. Even now when there was every need for hard thinking, his mind was jumping from one mental picture to another and arriving at wholly unrelated positions. In the first place there was the picture of a telephone number—"North nine nine nine!" Funny how that number stuck! Euphonious—three nines! A good long foolish talk with Cess would help any man's soul! Then another jump and another picture. Poor old Gik—what a mess! By George, I'll vote Republican this year! Largely, the ideals are with the Democrats, the efficiency with the



Republicans! But a damnable pass now—no ideals or liberalism anywhere! Yes, I'm a liberal! Well, at least the Republicans will bring in a lot of able chaps—knit the old government together again—run it well too! Slow things up, of course—means going back a bit! Maybe they need slowing—all speed mad—look at our music—horrible jazz—of course the French couldn't understand it and that French girl couldn't dance it—so much speed's inartistic! *There's* a nation—the French have the art of living—we haven't! Yes, best to vote Republican—good personality Harding's! Between a Republican politician and a Democratic politician always take the Republican! I'm a liberal though—vote for progress before efficiency whenever there's a chance! True, yes, art and efficiency always with the conservatives. Well, we settled in favor of inefficiency and ugliness when we decided to be a republic and not a monarchy! Better vote Republican this time though!

North nine nine nine! Politics was easy but this other thing! Marriage! He was so near he could see the white of the institution's eye and was horrified. Good God! he didn't want to be married! To be one of those creatures always looking for a house or apartment to rent—bringing home bundles—putting the cat out at night—living by the clock—wearing overshoes—oh

Lord! To be substantial and reliable, use sound judgment, provide for the future, be responsible for certain other humans! All the Gascon in him rebelled. Married, he felt somehow he could never again walk the streets in just this manner—never thrill with the possibility of joining a gypsy lot with any of these strange passing faces and racing to the furthest corners of the world—never feel High Romance lurking just around the next block! Nonsense, of course! He knew there was no substance in these vague dreams. Married or not he would never give himself to such an existence of thoughtless adventure! And nothing could ever fill his sky as Anne did—God bless her wonderful heart! But that wasn't it! He didn't want to *do* any of these errant things—only to feel that they lay within his power, his right! To feel at liberty to go utterly to the dogs—and not to go; to feel Life a jingling coin in his pocket that he might spend anywhere, a brimming cup that was his to sip—or drain—or spill! Marriage, and the coin was placed, the cup quaffed for better or worse, life ordered and requiring prevision!

As much as Gilchrist loved order, plan, and organization, Hugh hated them. They were names for death itself! His was the journalist's soul—life was a thing of moments, not years. Ah, with all his heart now he was sorry the war was

over! How keen those days had been when the future was all uncertain and to-morrow might be the end! How lustily he had lived each hour because it might be the last. His mind's eye saw a valiant little destroyer tossing the English channel, decks raw with wind and sea, nosing treacherous mine-fields, aggressive to the slinking outline of the submarine! How he had loved his fellow-man on that boat! how quick his faculties, how bright his eye, what splendid thoughts!

But Anne—! No! Unreasonably *no*! Why, she had brought back that very keenness! After the war, before she came, how infinitely dull it had all been! How desperately he had wanted to keep the heroic, the vital, in things and how pitifully Washington had been rotting them for him! Damn this city! There was a deadly sweetness about it—tropical languor! All right for Gik, it was his battleground, there were countless calls to arms here for him. But not for himself—it was decay. Couldn't feel things here or believe in any one else's feeling—it was all so pleasant and easy! The Potomac was so damnable placid! He thought of the Hudson sweeping strongly by rugged Palisades at New York. There was a river! Yes, he must get out of Washington! But could he—he loved it so!

Except that Anne—yes, he could leave it with her! Jove, how blind—the new sky, the keen



sky, why Anne could give him just that! Marriage, he would always hate abstractly, yes, but marriage-to-Anne was something else! It was the solution! That offer of Gwathmey's little paper out in Montana—he could accept that. Real people there—rugged, whole-hearted living—he and Anne!

He turned in at the Post Building and wrote her twelve pages—buoyant, impossible pages. Then lunched and wrote her ten more of nonsense and love. At night he telegraphed her, about nothing.

Once Hugh had loved a woman older than himself—in initiative and years—and her unconscious mothering had become intolerable to his sense of manliness. Later there had been another, his peer in self-reliance and information, from whom a strange sort of mutual jealousy had parted him in the end. Of all men he needed what Anne gave him—the picture of himself as protector and provider. Against the quixotic spirit that made him light about life and over-generous in the bargains he drove with it, he needed a spirit like hers which took life earnestly and with so much of faith. A Gascon may trifle all his days away but he stands ready always to “run himself gallantly to death for a cause worth the running.” And to one Gascon Anne McLanahan was worth the running.



The return special from San Francisco was crowded; Gilchrist and the Senator passed an uncomfortable two days before reaching Chicago. Just now they irritated each other. If only Senator Calhoun wouldn't be so confoundedly eloquent, Gilchrist thought! It was callous—this oratory in the face of sober misfortune! To the younger man eloquence was simply an art or a weapon, and he could never understand that to the Senator it was second nature and a thing of the blood. "Gentlemen," he announced to Gilchrist and Congressman Jones on the observation platform one afternoon, "Armageddon was lost when the Democratic Party chose James M. Cox to bear its standard. The League is dead! Internationalism is dead! The dreams for which this country gave its blood are dead! The final battle of Good and Evil has gone to the forces of Evil. The United States has turned its back on manifest destiny and is hurrying sordidly away from internationalism to a greater and more grasping nationalism——" (here he tossed his head after his best platform manner) "that being the condition of things, I, for one, shall not thrust my head in the sand. If the cry is to be nationalism I shall not be found wanting. Henceforth I stand for a protective tariff, compulsory military training, strict immigration laws—everything that

makes a nation sufficient unto itself, everything that equips for the next war, everything——”

“Not at all, Senator,” Gilchrist interrupted, “I’ve changed my mind on that since we left San Francisco. Perhaps you’re right about the League; the sort we wanted is dead as Hector. Admit that—and say only the domestic issues are left. But they are vital too and Cox is sound on them. He’s a progressive and a good administrator and I’m going to work for him. There’s nothing against Harding, the man—he’s clean, able, and honorable—surely. But in the long run the Democratic Party is the party of progress and I’m willing to swallow a little bitterness for the preservation of that party. I think you’re wrong too about this Armageddon business. Truth is, Senator, there *is* no Armageddon in the sense of a final battle and there’s where we’ve gone wrong. I thought the war was the final battle and you thought the League fight was; as a matter of fact these were only skirmishes in a campaign that never ends. After you and I and our grandchildren are all dead it will still be going on. I’ve decided to stay in politics and keep my record clean by voting Democrat and losing another skirmish. But I won’t make the mistake again of believing the whole riddle of the universe is mixed up in any single scrap. No, there *is no Armageddon!*”

The Senator looked pained at these last words, and confused. "On the contrary——" he began, and halted. To have the final word always and to counter every move of an opponent was a life-long habit not easily relinquished. Perhaps to Gilchrist alone of all the world could he confess error, and to him only tacitly.

"Well," he shifted, pathetically half-serious, "there must be an Armageddon because I'm lecturing on it this summer. Its all contracted for." After which rear-guard volley he withdrew to the smoking room with a small and mystically unearthed volume of "The Three Musketeers."

When he left the train at Chicago Gilchrist missed him though and realized how companionable he had been during these memorable ten days. How utterly lovable and great-hearted the man was! Every one felt older than the Senator; the world mothered and loved the boy in him as it applauded and admired the orator!

"Telegram for Mister Sturneman!"

"Here, boy—is that Sturtevant?" The messenger looked at his envelope. "Sturtevant, yes-sir, that's what I said."

"The devil you did." Gilchrist handed him a coin.

Good old Hugh, he thought! Not half as hard hit as he thinks I am! Two days earlier Gilchrist would have cherished a telegram from Hugh

more sentimentally than one from any woman; but now he felt a certain patronage for his friend as though Hugh and not himself had called for help. Good old Hugh!

He tore open the yellow envelope and read; "Father and I motoring Elizabethtown to Washington. Arrive Cumberland an hour before your train. Get off and drive down with us. Alice."



## *Chapter Twenty-five*

**T**O reach Cumberland from Washington before noon meant getting up at four-thirty. By eight Alice was well on the way, with the Stutz purring along perfectly. It would have to go like that, she thought, to reach Cumberland in time!

But this was her day! There could be no mishap; there simply shouldn't! Mrs. Deering was at White Sulphur and her father wouldn't miss her until night. Shades of all the lovely June days in history, smile on this day!

Twenty minutes before noon she rolled smoothly down the mountain road into Cumberland and drove at once to a garage.

"I want the new tire taken off and that old one in back put on," she directed the garage man.

He examined the old tire and shook his head. "Won't get ten miles on that tire, lady—its gone. Better throw it away."

"Never mind, I want it put on."

The Chicago train was an hour late. When it pulled into the long shed Gilchrist's Pullman came

to a stop exactly where she stood on the platform so that they were immediately face to face. This annoyed her; she was sorry not to have stayed in the waiting room.

They met with a careful friendliness that was overdone; both of them knew it. He felt tired and heavy and was prepared to dislike himself with her.

"Hope you lunched on the train," she said as they walked to the Stutz, "we'll have to start this minute to reach Washington before it's too late to be out unchaperoned, you know."

"Why, where's Mr. Deering?"

To her credit, she was sorry for the deception about her father—sorry because it seemed inappropriate. But one whose motivation comes only from love or hate is never nice about means when an end is in sight.

"On the train," she said quickly, indicating the retreating express. "You're over an hour late and he had an appointment in town at six. Scolded me all the way up—I mean down—about my driving. You don't mind taking your life in your hands, Gilchrist?"

Within ten minutes they had cleared Cumberland and were nosing over the mountain top. On the long down grade she turned off the engine and they rolled for miles at a good speed. She

wondered about the tire—the man had said ten miles!

He was talking eagerly now and as if sure of her interest. The topics were all impersonal—the convention, eccentricities of the Senator, Hugh. Of the purring Stutz and the pleasant Maryland country they were passing he was oblivious. Of course he would be, she thought! Wooden man!

“Yes, Hugh was at Elizabethtown,” she answered one of his questions, “that’s how I heard you’d be passing Cumberland.”

“Why, how could he? I sent that wire to Washington!”

“And what do you think,” she interrupted quickly, “they’ve decided to marry next month and live in Montana. Hugh has a newspaper offer.”

“In Montana?” He was suddenly dismayed. It was impossible! He had never thought of giving Hugh up! Why, Hugh was bread and meat to him! This was monstrous! A swift tide of loneliness swept him. He was growing old! In a year he would be thirty—that was middle age!

At Hagerstown they stopped for a glass of milk and were arrested for parking on the wrong side of the street. To Gilchrist’s annoyance Alice took the lead and talked to the officer so sweetly and eloquently that the charmed blue-coat finally

apologized for his interference. "You can stay on the wrong side as long as you want, Miss," he asserted gallantly.

Then they were out in the open again, winding down a level road through rolling farm lands. Twenty miles from town Alice's foot on the accelerator forced the speedometer to fifty-five miles.

They flashed through a ravine, across a stone bridge—and the tire burst! Before she could check the swerve they had hurtled through a wooden fence and were careering across an open field to a final stop some hundred feet from the road.

He never forgot the white horror in her face when they were motionless in the bog. "Oh, my dear—I—didn't mean that to happen—a little sooner—while we were on that bridge—you—we—oh, its too dreadful!" She clutched his sleeve.

It was two hours before they pulled the car out of the mud with help from the next village. When they started again Alice ordered Gilchrist to drive. He wondered, knowing her steady nerve. But he did not know her guilty conscience.

At the next town he telegraphed ahead to Dumbarton Club in Washington for dinner to be reserved at nine o'clock; they were already three hours' late. As they drove on the sun dropped down the hills over their shoulders and blue



magic settled on the world. They seemed suspended in limitless splendor and silence as the car glided noiselessly into the twilight. She wondered if he were bitter because of the convention and the Senate, if his cheerfulness meant the same desperation it had meant when she had seen him dancing at Rauscher's last March.

The blue on the hills deepened as the gold in the skies faded behind them. She remembered a thing she had learned at school—under stipulation:

“Fail I alone in words or deeds?  
Why, all men strive and who succeeds!  
We rode, it seemed our spirits flew  
Through unknown regions, cities new,  
As the world flashed by on either side.”

She wished she might quote it to Gilchrist—and dared not.

“Hugh says the League is a dead one.”

“It is—for a time.”

“Then there'll be another war. This one was a flat failure!”

She spoke carelessly but all her attention was on his reply. The vibrant, positive note in his voice gave her an odd little thrill.

“There was a time I would have thought so,” he said.

“And now?”

“Now I know that whatever happens the war

was not a failure. Its a rotten world to look at, yes—we didn't get a better one. But we got the material for one—and the knowledge of how to make it so. It's still up to us."

He was smiling without looking at her, remembering a day during the convention when a woman had lead one of the McAdoo parades and he had thought of Alice and of Joan of Arc. He wondered if the Maid of Orleans had more courage, vitality, strength, pugnacity than Alice Deering.

And she was thinking that he was splendid to look at, with his long arms on the wheel and his compact, keen-featured head silhouetted against the sky. She was thinking too that he was wooden and that she didn't care!

"Not a new earth," he was saying, "but a new heaven. New patience, new conceptions of what humanity is capable. Because of the war we know at least that heaven is a little higher than we thought—and hell a little lower. We know what men can do in sacrifice and faith and spiritual adventure. More of what is possible, what desirable, what dangerous. We are better equipped to adjust the contacts of nation with nation, class with class, man with man——"

"And of man with woman," she broke in. There was a primitive, violent expression in her face. "Women won a new place for themselves

in the war—and won't be denied their heart's desire."

It was dark now and a few stars were out. The speeding Stutz which had seemed a majestic engine of the blue twilight, was rather a silly thing under the solemn contemplation of stars—a shallow, chattering woman in spangles and beads vaunting herself in the face of infinity.

They glided through a wood where the fresh damp air brought a sense of nearness to running water. Around a bend in the road came a sturdy little brook, starlight glinting its surface, dim gray boulders twisting its course.

Oh, she thought, he *is* so wooden—he makes such speeches—always such speeches! Never mind!

"Gilchrist—stop. Isn't this nice!"

The car slowed and halted. A few crickets, and silence.

"It smells like the very bottom of the woods, doesn't it! Oh, I'm so hot and dry."

"You must be tired too," he said, "we can't be more than ten miles from town."

His self-consciousness exasperated her. Did the beauty of this mean nothing!

"Let's get out," she ordered, "I'm going to wade."

She led the way through a border of underbrush to the water and jumped boldly out upon

a flattened rock around which the brook sounded faintly. When he joined her she was already pulling off shoes and stockings. In a moment smooth white legs were dipped in the water and Alice was sighing in tired ecstasy.

“Oh, I was so hot, so beastly hot,” she cooed.

He was silent on the boulder besides her. The sense of intimacy in those stockings on the rock, with Alice bare-legged on the edge; the sound of her voice singing with the brook; the consciousness of the long, adventurous day together—were forcing on him what he had learned tortuously to forget.

“Oh-h——” her subdued laugh was as liquid as the brook’s, “my hair’s coming down—it was caught in the brush!” A dark mass fell over her shoulders and behind her to the rock with a faint hint of some delicate scent. “What a mess—now it must be combed”—and in a moment she was stroking the rich volume of it with her shell comb, chanting some weird barbaric monotony of her own, feet splashing joyfully.

“Alice—” he whispered. To him there was no thought that she might be acting, that this witchery was deliberate—nothing but a tumult which began to overpower him. Then, as quickly, came a steadying conviction that halted him. This woman was far more than the creature of smooth legs and sweet-smelling hair singing there



on the rock! She was a spiritual dignity; with all his will he made himself remember Joan of Arc.

He must hold her hairpins while she bound her hair, turn his back while she put on her stockings (marvelling why not when they were being taken off and putting it down to some practical feature of feminine apparel which made it possible to take them off more modestly than put them on)!

Back in the car again she re-assumed poise and reserve, chatting impersonally. But Gilchrist was moody, absent-minded. Sometimes he failed altogether to catch what she was saying. Old dreams were crowding him, old fires burning again, old inhibitions losing their importance.

Half an hour later they reached Georgetown in the District and alighted, tired and dusty, at Dumbarton which crests the long hill commanding Washington and the Potomac. She had never been here before; it was not a fashionable club—a huge, rambling old house in need of paint, half hidden in great trees.

Inside she bathed the dust and some of the weariness from her eyes, while Gilchrist walked across the lawn to the terrace above the tennis courts. It was good to stretch his legs! Below, inexpressibly beautiful to him, were the city and the river. For nature he cared little, but the city there was everything, the very core of his world,

token of a past achieved and a future promised! And the Monument, rising clear-lined over the trees—the Eternal Finger—was symbol of that thing in himself and every man which could forgive the past where it had failed and face the future even when it threatened! Ah, there was his sign in the sky—a shaft of fire reaching from an old earth to a new heaven. The city around its base was his battleground where strong souls should kindle, flame, serve the Great Purpose, and expire through endless years! He felt as though all the toil and turmoil of his twenty-nine years had been to bring him to this place to-night.

Devoutly he resolved to hold the place. And yet wondered what this force could be that now seemed to crystallize all his soul in one clear moment, to sound all the old bugles for him, fix him his definite place in eternity.

Across the lawn, from under the great blue poplar that hid the house, a gray figure was coming, firm-footed, noiseless.

Now he knew. All his life he had waited for that figure to come. For him—yes—it was the Maid of Orleans in shining armour! Behind him now were his City, his Monument. As one who receives a sacrament he waited, reverent.

## *Chapter Twenty-six*

**A**T twenty-five minutes to midnight an insistent telephone rang Hugh from godlike sleep.

"Hello," he drowsed, half-conscious.

"——you, Hugh? Damn it man, trying to get you half an hour. Get up—quick!" It was Gilchrist.

"Why?" He dozed as he spoke.

"Oh, don't be an ass—wake up—wake up—we're at Rockville, Alice and I. You've got to be here—ought to make it in forty minutes—taxi!"

Chaos in Gilchrist's receiver; leaning dangerously out of bed to the telephone, Hugh had fallen.

"All right," he shouted from the floor, "I'll be there, old scout. Maybe in five minutes!"

In a moment he was pulling on trousers over pajamas, swearing at a truant shoe, buttoning his shirt two at a time, laughing softly,

"Buccaneer—Buccaneer, you win!"

THE END









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